



Your Everything Summer®

GUIDE & PLANNER

- Camps
- Teen Programs
- Packing
- Vacations
- Parenting
- And More!

**100+ ways to create memorable
summers—for your entire family!**

By Jill Tipograph, Founder & CEO
Everything Summer® LLC



www.everythingsummer.com

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Printed in the United States of America.

We at **Everything Summer**® trust that you will find the contents of this Guide to be useful, insightful and fun.

Please contact us if you have questions or suggestions for future editions or new products and services.

Tell your friends and neighbors about the Guide too.
It makes a great gift for a busy family!

Everything Summer, also offers a wide range of program guidance, selection, organization, and other services for today's busy families. If you are interested in scheduling a personal consultation for this summer or next, please get in touch. We look forward to helping you!

Jill Tipograph, Founder & CEO

www.everythingsummer.com

Welcome

to Your Everything Summer® Guide & Planner!

When we were kids, summer was such a simple time – full of fun, relaxation and freedom from all obligations. My goal is to help keep that summer spirit alive for you and your family.

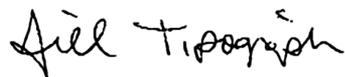
Our lives have gotten complex, but with the right plans and tools, you and your family can fully enjoy the summer months. The information contained in this Guide will help to ensure that everyone in your family has happy lifelong summer memories. Inside this Guide and Planner you will find:

- **The Everything Summer® Inventory and Memory Planners: A simple checklist and calendars that help you set goals for yourself and your family.**
- **Everything Summer® Tips for an enjoyable and stress-free camp experience. From packing to homesickness, communications, transitioning and more.**
- **Guides for Day Camp, Overnight Camp and Teen Programs, and Special Needs: Advice and useful evaluation worksheets.**
- **Camp Director Questions: Drawn from years of my own experience, parent input and the directors themselves. The answers will help keep your kids safe and secure and give you valuable peace of mind.**

Please contact me with your comments on how this Guide has served your family in choosing a summer program, with your questions, and with the types of tips and tools you would like to see in future editions of this Guide by e-mailing jill@everythingsummer.com.

We also offer consulting services that include guidance on camp and teen program selection, as well as enrichment, internships and career coaching. Please visit our website at www.everythingsummer.com to learn more.

Sincerely,



Jill Tipograph
Founder & CEO

About the Author

Jill Tipograph, Founder & CEO, Everything Summer®



The New York Times called Jill an “expert” for summer. That’s because she takes the time to understand the personality and needs of each individual family and child – and tailors her recommendations accordingly. Her objective guidance helps you find a program that is just right.

A youth development expert, educational consultant and professional summer program planner for more than twenty years, Jill has researched more than 2,000 programs and helped families worldwide plan the “right” summers. Her unique Everything Summer® evaluation process is focused on safety, well-being, family values, and “personality fit” between kids and programs. Our team visits camps/programs in season and personally interviews directors and college admissions officers year-round. This gives Jill a comprehensive look into each program’s profile, culture and priorities – enabling her to give first-hand insights to her client families.

Jill has a BA in Psychology and an MBA from New York University. Prior to summer advising, she spent many years as a corporate executive, honing her skills in client service, research, analysis and planning.

She is an active member of the American Camp Association (ACA), and a professional member of the Independent Educational Consultants Association. Jill is on the board of the non-profit Summer Camp Opportunities Promote Education (www.SCOPEUSA.org), an organization that sends inner city children to camp. And she speaks frequently on youth, parenting and educational topics.

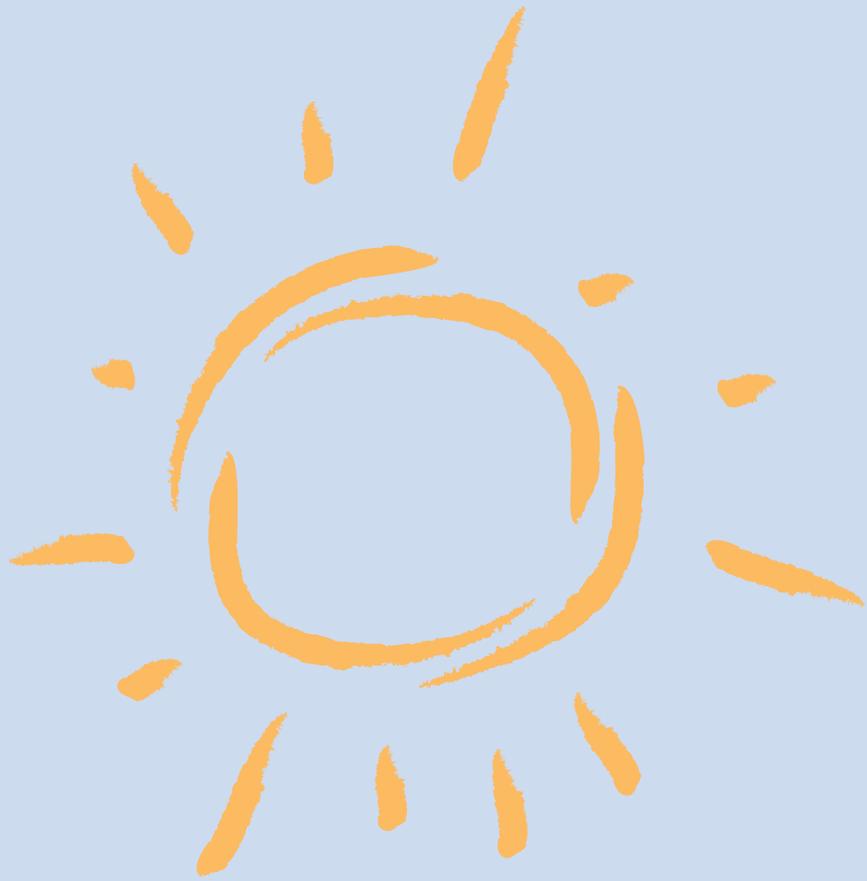
Jill has appeared in national and local media, including:

- *ABCNews*
- *Bloomberg News*
- *Boston Globe*
- *Business Week*
- *CNBC*
- *Forbes*
- *MSNBC*
- *NBC TV’s “Today Show”*
- *NBC News*
- *New York Times*
- *New York Observer*
- *Parents TV*
- *Real Simple*
- *SheKnows.com*
- *Smart Money*
- *Time Out New York Kids*
- *USA Today*
- *Wall Street Journal*

Jill produces seasonal newsletters and a blog that cover summer trends and insights, as well as parenting and education topics. Jill has two children who have been through camp and a variety of teen summer programs.

Table of Contents

<u>Family Tips and Tools</u>	5
Inventory	6
Memory Planners	9
3-Months-of-Memories Calendars	10
Wisdom	16
<u>Camps/Teen Programs</u>	19
Section Contents	20
To Do's	21
Tips for Touring	23
Packing Hints	25
Summer Communications	27
Homesickness Guide	30
Day Camp Guide	33
Overnight Camp Readiness	35
Overnight Camp Guide	37
Camp Evaluator	39
Teen Program Choices	41
Teen Guide	46
Teen Program Evaluator	48
High School Summer Planner	50
<u>Special Children & Teens</u>	53
Addressing Special Needs	54
Managing Food Allergies	56
<u>Useful Tools</u>	58
Camp Director Questions	59
Camp Director Responses	62
Reference Check	66
After Camp "De-compression"	68
<u>Notes</u>	70



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Family Tips and Tools

The following pages contain thought-starters and organization tools to help you plan great summers – for yourself and your family.

You can personalize these pages to reflect your own goals, experiences and ideas. We've also given you some handy "reminders" to help you along the way.

**Grab a pen and get moving
toward a memorable summer...**

Please complete this simple worksheet. It will help you focus on the things that can make you – and your family – the happiest and most relaxed this summer and every summer.



Things I'd love to do this summer. Stretch the boundaries, but make sure everything is achievable:

	Alone	With my Family	With my Partner
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Things my kids love to do when they have free time:

Child _____

Things he/she loves: _____

Your Everything Summer[®] Inventory (cont'd)

One new and different thing I'd like to try this summer is:

Things that stress me out about summer are: _____

Ways I can eliminate these summer stresses include:



Memory Planners

Now, using the thoughts you've gathered in the 'Summer Inventory' and the various planning tools that follow, start to map out three months of relaxation, fun and memories.

After you've filled in your calendars, take a close look at them and make sure you've allowed enough time for:

- Necessary activities/appointments
- Fun for your family
- Fun for your kids
- **Fun for YOU!**

JUNE

Reminders and Hints:

- Make doctors' and immunization appointments.
- Help kids prepare for school finals/graduations.
- Complete last-minute shopping for camp/teen programs, end-of-school events, teacher gifts.
- Confirm travel plans (including passports, flights, hotels, itineraries, visiting day reservations).
- Make packing lists and prepare luggage/trunks. Be sure to store the final camp list (either manually or in your computer) to ensure complete content return and proper packing for next year.
- Shop for "summer essentials" like stationery for camp, suntan lotion, batteries, stamps, etc.
- Mail your first summer letter to your child to ensure a warm welcome when he/she arrives at camp.
- Note camp/summer program departure dates.

Fun and Relaxation:

- Look for last-minute bargains on things like swimwear – and be sure to treat yourself.
- If you have some "kid-free" time this summer, make reservations for something fun/romantic for July/August.
- Plan a family barbeque.
- Arrange for a sitter or helper during summer months.
- Stock up on summer reading.
- Plan a family vacation for post-camp to catch up on summer experiences and bond again before the school year starts.



June

Activities, tasks, appointments

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JULY

Reminders and Hints:

- Note camp/summer program departure dates.
- Plan for/attend visiting day.
- Arrange/attend first-time camper tours.
- Mail/e-mail letters to camp.
- Send care packages; be sure to check camp policy.
- Schedule pre-school doctors' appointments.
- Complete the organization project you've been putting off.
- Use time when your kids are away to clean up the garage, kitchen, kids' rooms, photo albums and/or closets. Clearing out clutter can be empowering!

Fun and Relaxation:

- Schedule a "date night" with a spouse or significant other.
- Embark on family adventures with younger kids.
- Play "hooky" from work one day and go to the beach, lake or mountains.
- Explore your own town – walking tours, cultural activities, etc.
- Schedule a personal shopping session; revamp your fall wardrobe or take advantage of summer sales.
- Consider starting a home decorating project.
- Enjoy that fun/romantic weekend you planned.
- Send e-postcards to friends/relatives as you enjoy your summer activities.
- Relish the moments of camp visiting day.



July

Activities, tasks, appointments

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AUGUST

Reminders and Hints:

- ❑ Store all cleaned and re-usable camp items in clear containers in an accessible area for easy retrieval next spring.
- ❑ Get timely feedback from your kids on their summer experiences.
- ❑ Provide constructive thoughts to the camp/program director; he or she prefers to hear positive/negative comments while they are still fresh.
- ❑ Start planning for next summer, while you are still in “summer mode.”
- ❑ Go back-to-school shopping.

Fun and Relaxation:

- ❑ Do something fun and relaxing for yourself – spa visit, massage, etc.
- ❑ Create a scrapbook or online journal of summer memories.
- ❑ Organize a family reunion when kids return from overnight camp and teen programs.
- ❑ Escape on that final family getaway.
- ❑ Savor summer’s final days.



August

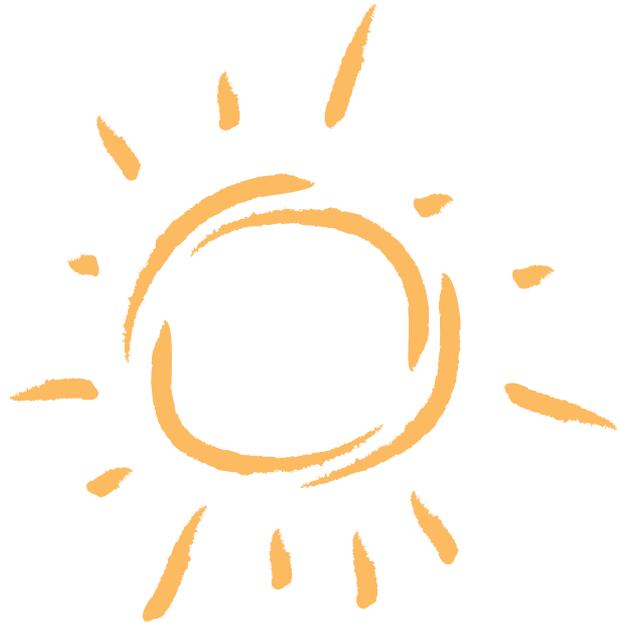
Activities, tasks, appointments

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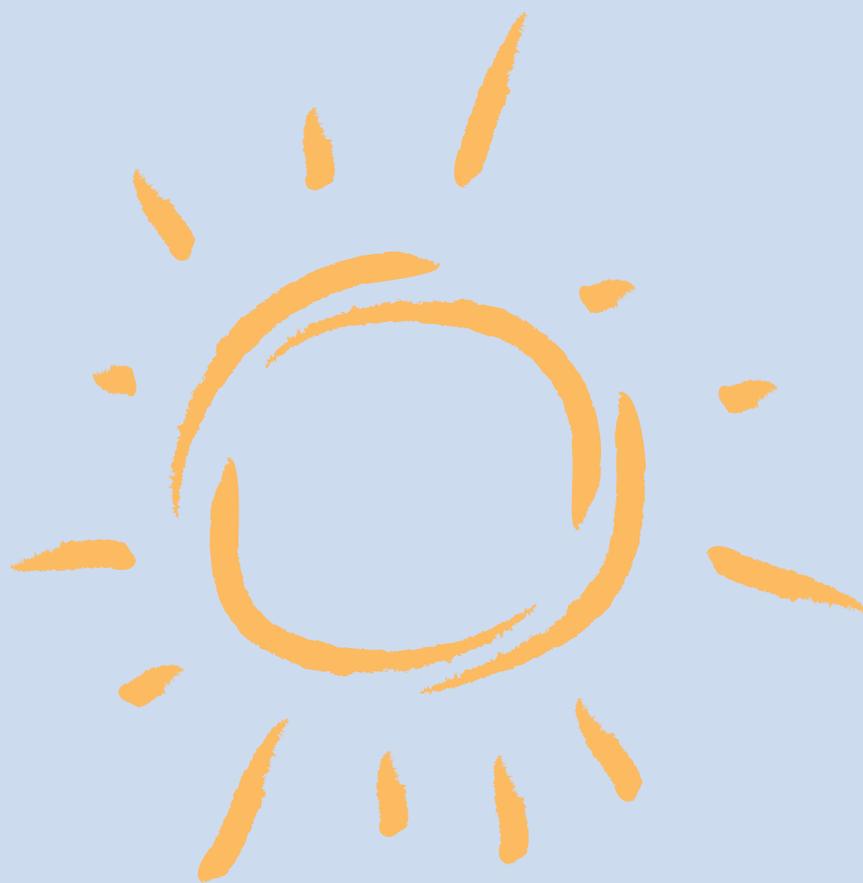
Simple Ideas to Make Every Summer Fun, Interesting and Stress-Free

- 1** Make summer planning a family affair. Schedule an evening to get together and go through camp and travel brochures, websites and videos. Plan it around a family dinner or barbeque to get in the spirit.
- 2** Be on the look-out for summer merchandise all year long, especially when it's on sale. Some fall/winter merchandise – like flannels, sweats and fleeces – is valuable for those chilly nights at camp.
- 3** Don't "overbook" your summer; allow enough free time just to hang-out.
- 4** Plan to take off early (or take off an entire day) at least once every summer. Take advantage of the weather and your mood and escape to the beach, mountains or somewhere fun. Engage a close friend, relative or spouse on your "hooky" day!
- 5** If you can stand the heat, look for vacation bargains in warmer climates.



- 6** Keep a photo album (paper or online) of every summer. Summer family pictures make great holiday cards too!
- 7** Don't fall prey to "end of summer slump." Think of fun things to do in the fall or winter or plan early for next summer.
- 8** Read up! Go online or to your local library and learn something new or simply to relax.
- 9** Organize your home/office while your kids are busy or away. Discarding or donating unwanted items can give you a tremendous sense of freedom.
- 10** Develop rituals you and your family can enjoy, remember and look forward to every summer and year-round.

Have Summer Wisdom you'd like to share? Please e-mail me at jill@everythingsummer.com and I'll add your ideas to future editions of the *Everything Summer® Guide & Planner*.



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Camps/Teen Programs

Based on years of experience guiding parents on camp and teen program selection, we've compiled these tips and worksheets to help you choose from among the thousands of available options.

You'll learn how to determine if your child is ready for camp, to narrow down your choices, what to look for in camp and teen program brochures, websites, videos and visits. We also provide tips on how to effectively "interview" a camp or program director and check parent references.

Even the most adept "do-it-yourselfer" can be overwhelmed by the summer program selection process. To help, Everything Summer® offers personalized, objective, unbiased and highly-customized assistance to help parents cull through the myriad of options and determine which program is right for their kids – at various stages of development.

Please contact us if you are interested in our consulting services.

Camp/Teen Program Contents

The following pages include virtually everything you need to evaluate and choose summer programs for your kids and teens:



1 Tips & Phases

- To Do's
- Tips for Touring
- Packing Hints
- Summer Communications
- Homesickness

2 Day Camp

- Day Camp Guide

3 Overnight Camp

- Overnight Camp Readiness
- Overnight Camp Guide
- Day/Overnight Camp Evaluator

4 Teen Programs

- Teen Program Choices
- Teen Guide
- Teen Program Evaluator
- High School Summer Planner

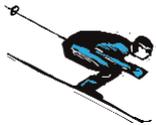
Your Everything Summer® Camp/Teen Program To-Do's



Fall (September - December)

- Give feedback to program directors and **Everything Summer®** about prior summer experience. Be honest and thorough. Decide if you're looking to make a change, if a sibling is ready for camp, or if your child is ready to "graduate" to a teen program.
- Begin planning early for next summer. Secure information about camps/programs. (Use the Camp/Teen Program Guides and Evaluators.)
- If you've made your decision, commit early! Quality programs fill up fast.

NOTES:



Winter (January - March)

- Make reservations for visiting day(s) and camp pick-up, if appropriate.
- If you haven't decided on a camp/program yet, do it now.
- Start shopping to take advantage of sales (especially on items like fleece, sweats, flannels and outerwear); order early from camp catalogs too, for best selection and delivery lead time.
- Keep in touch with the camp/program for new information and special events.
- Peruse books about summer (**Everything Summer®** can make suggestions).

NOTES:

Your Everything Summer® Camp/Teen Program To-Do's (cont'd)



Spring (April - June)

- Start packing early! Leave plenty of time to secure specialty items, passports, teacher or coach recommendations, immunizations, etc.
- Make all necessary appointments for doctor/dentist/orthodontist visits - for both before camp and after return since they book up fast.
- Speak to other parents and **Everything Summer®** about useful items, packing tips and strategies, especially for first-timers and teens.
- Plan for communicating when your child is at camp:
 - Pre-addressed stationery (Your child is more likely to write if you make it easy!)
 - E-mail addresses/cell phone contacts/itineraries
- Arrange activities via **Everything Summer's®** travel planners for the rest of your family for the time while your child/teen is away; if this is a 'childless' summer, plan some fun activities (dinners, theater, weekend getaways, etc.) for you and your spouse or partner.
- Get ready for return from camp. Allow sufficient time for school supply and clothes shopping, summer reading and necessary appointments.

NOTES:



Summer (July - August)

- Communicate! Discuss concerns with camp/program director and **Everything Summer®**.
- Write positive letters and send cards and care packages (but be sure to check camp/program policy first).
- Visit camps for next summer.
- Plan for your child's return (see above).
- ENJOY THE SUMMER AND AN AWESOME FAMILY REUNION!

NOTES:

Your Everything Summer® Tips for Touring

The best way to evaluate a camp is to actually visit it with your child, preferably the summer before you plan to enroll. These tours are enlightening and offer families an in-operation view of the director, staff, campers and facilities. An in-season camp visit can be a great experience with just a little planning.

Tour Types

Many camps have moved to group tours or designated tour times which optimize your experience and minimize camp interruption. Some camps find the time to schedule individual tours and provide families with one-on-one attention.

Ask ahead of time which tour type you will be given, so you can be prepared to ask questions privately if necessary. Some camps have designated tour guides, including teen campers, counselors or parent liaisons, and allow families to meet with the director for questions. Either tour type can be effective if a family is prepared ahead of time.

What to Look For

There are a few key things to watch for during your camp tour:

- Note the involvement and rapport between the staff and kids, especially the director. Inquire about and be alert to safety issues.
- Find out about the quality of the activities, instruction and programming. Look at the facilities where your child will live in overnight camp, or where their group will be housed in day camp.
- Ask to observe campers close to your child's age.
- Carry a list of key questions to ask (see 'Camp Director Questions' section of this Guide).

Camp Trial: A Rookie Day

Many overnight camps offer trial days for potential campers. These are either pre-scheduled days with similarly aged kids or are integrated into a family tour where kids go to an activity with campers their age while their parents tour the camp. These situations can be insightful when coupled with a camp tour. Ask if camp trials are offered; space and dates are often limited.



Plan Trips Well in Advance

Call ahead! Tours are not available at all times. The first and last weeks of overnight camp are often closed to tours and many camps do not allow visits on trip days, either. Weekends are the most popular time to visit camps but you will receive the most attention on a mid-week tour.

Do Not Over-Schedule

Two tours a day are ideal; one tour in the morning and one in the afternoon. Only consider adding a third camp tour if the location is close by or if you do not have time to visit the following day.

Tour When Family is Rested and Fed

Do make sure everyone in your family is appropriately dressed with comfortable shoes, a hat, water, etc. to optimize the tour experience. Evaluate whether or not a younger child can handle all the walking and traveling involved.

Have Realistic Expectations

Depending on the time of day you visit, activities could be altered due to weather or scheduling. Overlook some bunk messiness but not poorly maintained facilities. If you are not taken to an area which has interest to you or your child, ask if the specific area can be included in the tour.

No Tour? No Problem

If a camp tour is not possible, don't fret. Most overnight camp directors will visit with your family in person during the off-season. Some directors request an in-person visit for bunk placement. Most day camp offices are open year round to meet with families. If you visit a camp in the off-season, you will receive undivided attention and can really observe the director's interaction with you and your child.

Your Everything Summer® Homesickness Guide

You have enrolled your child in overnight camp and preparation has begun for this exciting experience. The feeling of sadness due to separation from one's home or parents is very normal.

The goal is to have your child feel quickly that he/she belongs to a group and a new community. Homesickness can last a few days, go away and return again, or continue until kids see their parents on visiting day or their homecoming. Typical times during which homesickness can set in are when families are normally together at home such as waking up, meals, and going to bed. Homesickness can also set in during times of inactivity at camp. Use these tips to help your child, and you, deal with this.

- 1 Preparation is key!** This is the best preventative measure for homesickness. The more familiar a child is with the camp and routines, the less anxious he/she feels. Discuss with the director and your child ahead of time the camp schedule such as the time for wake up; meal times; clean up; daily activity periods – including choices and time length; breaks; rest hour; evening events; snacks and bedtime. Review bad weather activities too.
- 2 Help your child map out, before camp, homesickness coping strategies** by reassuring your child that homesickness is very normal and that he/she will not be alone in his/her feelings. Role-play potential situations. Let your child develop some positive responses. You may need to offer some suggestions.
- 3 Review the director-identified coping strategies available at camp.** Homesickness assistance is part of staff training. You can expect counselors to listen, encourage friendships and busyness, play ice-breaker games with kids (especially in the first few days of camp) and promote letter writing. Additional strategies include touring the camp in detail on the first day for familiarity; volunteering to help in the dining hall or office; keeping a journal of feelings.

Homesickness is a lesson in developing and strengthening coping skills. We often define “good parenting” as being there for our children at all times. A key role we play is teaching kids to honor commitments and develop ways to handle situations that are new or uncomfortable. This results in positive self-growth, accomplishment, empowerment and independence.

4 Ensure your child knows to turn to camp staff for assistance.

Reassure your child that camp will call parents if necessary. Explain when you will talk to your child, and how often you will write. Be sure these match your camp’s policies. Discuss how your child will personalize his/her bunk space, so the newness does not feel so strange.

5 Send small reminder items from home. These may include photos, a favorite pillow, books, mementos, encouraging notes or cards or a special box of feel-good items a child can turn to in times of sadness to make him/her smile and feel better.

Keeping busy, not spending time alone, participating in activities and traditions is very helpful. Remind kids that going to camp is not much different from succeeding at other new experiences they tried, such as moving, enrolling in a new school, or staying overnight at the home of a friend or family member. The difference is the distance, length of time, and that they cannot immediately turn to their parents for support.

Parental Support

Remain positive at all times. Parents play an integral role in helping their kids overcome homesickness. You made the overnight camp decision jointly with your child. Do not send mixed messages. Do not make any promise to pick your child up – kids then lose the encouragement to succeed at separating and benefiting from the camp experience. Instead, remind your child that you collectively made this commitment, and together (parents, child, and camp), you will work through this.

Remember that kids may write sad letters in the moment of homesickness or a time of being hurt. Documenting their feelings is therapeutic and the negative thoughts pass quickly. Don't over-analyze it. Pick up the phone and call the camp at any time to check on any concerns you may have.

Write funny, upbeat and encouraging letters and cards. Send frequent e-mails as well if your camp allows this so your child hears from you often. Don't dwell on home activities; focus on what's going on at camp. If homesickness is lasting, break down your child's expectations into small pieces so he/she can get through each day. Tell your child to write home that night about his/her day, noting his/her efforts to make one new friend or try a new activity; that you will call the camp in two days to see how he/she is doing. Each time your child accomplishes one step, he/she is committing further to getting over homesickness.

'Camp Sick' parents also need to adjust to their kids being away, but be sure to separate your own anxieties from those of your kids. As referenced previously, familiarize yourself with the camp, director, your child's routines and all camp policies ahead of time. Technology today helps with the transition, since parents at most camps can view photos on a secure, password protected website while their kids are away. But do not call the camp requesting to see your child. Most photos are taken randomly to reflect different activities and types/ages of kids. The viewing process itself is a strategy that brings you closer to your child and his/her environment.

Remember that camp is one of the most wonderful experiences a child can have, and sometimes life's greatest lessons and memories are not easy, but well worth the hard efforts.

Your Everything Summer[®] Camp Evaluator

This simple “scorecard” will help you compare the summer programs you’re considering.

Use websites, brochures, videos, conversations with the camp director, references and camp visits to gather information and take notes. You may want to use a simple scoring system, like a 1 to 5 rating, for the most important factors to help narrow your choices.

	Camp Name	Camp Name	Camp Name
THE PLACE			
<i>Location</i> o Distance o Bus or plane			
<i>Session Length</i>			
<i>Facilities</i> o Pool or lake o Flat versus hilly o Size of facility o Bunk amenities/size o In-bunk bathrooms/ showers o Indoor buildings o Capital improvements o Standards/accreditations			
THE PEOPLE			
<i>Size</i> o Age range o Entire camp o Each group			
<i>Camper Composition</i> o Local/national/international o Co-ed or single-sex o Diverse ethnicity/religions o Return rate o Successful camper type(s)			
<i>Ownership</i> o Individual o Group o Tenure			
<i>Staff</i> o Counselor/camper ratio o Ages o Background/training o Return rate o General or specialists			

Your Everything Summer® Camp Evaluator (cont'd)

	Camp Name	Camp Name	Camp Name
THE PROGRAM			
Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Structured or chosen by camper o Areas of focus o Instruction level/time o Inter- versus intra-camp competitions o Tryouts 			
Special Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Diet/allergies o Medical o Religious o Emotional/physical 			
THE POLICIES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o General philosophies (especially safety!) o Phone/e-mail contact o Visits o Uniforms o Electronic devices o Socials o Camper responsibilities o New camper programs o Reunions o Homesickness o Behavioral issues 			
Health Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Policies (e.g., prescriptions) o Physicians (on-site or nearby) o Infirmary o Nearest hospital o Experience with specific conditions 			
The Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tuition o Transportation o Luggage o Linens o Canteen o Trips/special activities o Visiting day o Other 			
References			
Director Meeting			
Other			

Teen Program Choices

Today's options for teens are more varied than ever before. Your teenager needs a combination of work and play to keep mentally, emotionally, and physically stimulated all summer long. You need to balance your own goals for your teen against your teen's need for independence.

Teen Program Options

Choosing from the many pre-teen and teen program options can be overwhelming. Most programs are co-ed, but some may offer single sex opportunities. (See 'Teen Guide' and 'Teen Program Evaluator' for more guidance.)

The first step is to decide what the agreed upon summer objective(s) should be – substance, safe fun/socialization, value to college. Then, you need to educate yourself and your teen about the many choices, and ask some honest questions to ensure the right match.

Academics

- Enrichment: enjoyable or mind-expanding courses; these offer either credit or non-credit value for high school or college; grades may or may not be provided. Gifted and/or very challenging curriculums are also available, as well as research opportunities. These programs typically take place on college or boarding school campuses, either domestically or abroad. Some offer travel opportunities too.
- College Prep: SAT tutoring and diagnostic tests, as well as college application writing, essay and creative writing workshops; college tours. These are offered either as stand-alone options or in tandem with enrichment programs, on college or boarding school campuses, either domestically or abroad.
- Remedial: study skill or subject-focused academic courses, to assist students in areas of need. These programs typically take place on college or boarding school campuses.

Strategies/Tips: These programs are run by separate sponsoring organizations or schools or universities themselves. Student population sizes range from about 25-500 teens, and sessions generally run 2-4 weeks in length, but can vary. Decide upon the intensity of the program. Students need to complete short or lengthy applications and essays, submit school transcripts, obtain guidance counselor and/or teacher recommendations, etc. More competitive programs may seek additional admissions criteria and can be highly selective. Motivated students may want to try taking summer courses at a college they are considering. Be sure the program's course offerings appeal to your teen. There can be a good amount of unstructured time and independence; parents and teens need to understand this and evaluate a program's parameters as relates to their needs and abilities.

Community Service

- Hands-on projects where students volunteer their time physically and mentally, to assist underprivileged, handicapped or indigent communities and/or people.
- Some of these programs may be integrated into an academic enrichment curriculum; most take place in rural areas both in the U.S, abroad and some third world nations. Options can involve foreign language and/or home stays as well.
- Most programs offer a variety of projects/trips in which a student may be involved; not necessarily one focus.

Strategies/Tips: Most program trips accommodate up to about 25-35 teens, but some may vary in size. Session lengths are typically 2-4 weeks, but can vary. Accommodations are usually very simple or meager. Home stays could involve one or two students. Climates and after-project hour and weekend activities are based on the program location's culture and environment. Be sure your teen and you are familiar ahead of time with these conditions; the destination's economics, laws, politics, safety; the program's physical challenges. Select the program that best meets his/her personal needs.

Internships

- In-field opportunities where qualified teens get hands-on experience in a variety of occupations and careers. Focuses can include: advertising, architecture, business, culinary arts, education, entertainment, fashion, film, finance, hospitality, journalism, law, marketing, medicine, museum/art galleries, music, publishing, retail, science, sports management, theatre, veterinary medicine and more.
- Students try out and learn about potential fields to consider, a good precursor for college selection criteria and major consideration.
- Most internship programs require a minimum of age 16 and/or completion of the high school sophomore grade.
- They are located in urban areas, domestically and abroad.

Strategies/Tips: These programs typically attract motivated, mature, independent kids who can adapt well to adult environments. Their sizes range from about 50-200 students, who usually work at internships alone. They generally last about 4 weeks, and students may travel to/from their work environments by themselves, and use public transportation as well. Kids usually reside in dorm-like environments. Some programs offer internship categories to which students apply and are assigned a particular opportunity when accepted; others may customize internships as well. Applications and qualifications are required. There is a good deal of freedom with rules students must follow. Be sure you and your teen are ready for the independence and responsibility.

Language

- Learning and/or immersion options. Students focus on one language.
- Locations are typically in countries of the spoken language, settings are rural, suburban, coastal or urban.
- Residential or home stay options, as well as a combination of both, are available.

Residential settings usually take place at foreign universities and may use dorm, apartment or hotel housing. These can manage a larger group of teens, typically about 50-100 or more kids. Language classes are usually held in the morning, followed by afternoon cultural courses or in-field workshops in the town/city of the university. Instructors are either employed by the organization, university or a language school with which the program contracts. Teaching styles can differ. Tests are given at home or once the students arrive at the program, to assess proficiency skills and appropriate class levels.

Home stays are smaller programs (on average, up to 40 teens) that involve one or more students staying with a pre-screened, compatible family to immerse the student in the language and culture. They typically attend classes with fellow program students in the morning and then eat the day's main meal and spend late afternoons and weekends with their host family. Most home stays are organized in neighboring communities so that students can more easily meet up with their program peers. Many host families often know one another.

Some programs combine travel and/or community service with language study, exposing students to different dialects and culture variations.

Strategies/Tips: Consider your child's maturity to handle a foreign situation, where customs, economics, freedoms, laws and politics may differ from your own country. Admissions criteria can be easier or stricter with different programs; this helps to attract the appropriate student to each option and can identify those seeking more challenging/intense programs. While session lengths generally vary from 2-4 or more weeks, to maximize the language experience, it is recommended students attend a program for at least four weeks. Understand your teen's objective – language exposure, advanced learning, cultural experience, travel, socialization – and select the program accordingly. Keep in mind his/her creature comforts as well.

Leadership

- Programs that introduce or further develop leadership skills.
- Choices include courses offered in academic enrichment programs, field-like opportunities in academic settings that give students exposure to leaders in different industries and hands-on experience in mock/role playing scenarios. Focuses include art, business, engineering, forensic science, international diplomacy, law, medicine and health care, politics and more.
- Another option involves outdoor leadership skills taught in advanced adventure trips that may require previous experience and a minimum age.

Leadership (cont'd)

Strategies/Tips: These programs attract focused, motivated teens with similar interests, and tend to be selective in their admissions. They are very active with little down time. While academic leadership programs can manage more than 100 kids, the outdoor leadership option is smaller, typically with less than 20 kids per trip. Leadership programs also tend to be shorter in duration, therefore working well as a supplemental summer program when trying to design a combination summer for a teen.

Specialties

- Options with single focuses allow teens to strengthen skills and become more advanced in particular passions.
- Most take place on private/boarding school and university properties domestically and abroad, and are run by separate organizations or schools/universities themselves.
- Academics: architecture, computers (games, programming, website development), debate, engineering, politics, science, space, writing, skill-building and others.
- Arts: performing (dance, drama, music, voice), fine arts (drawing, painting, sculpting, design), film (acting, directing, editing, production, writing), graphic design, multi-media, photography, videography and more.
- Disciplinary: rigorous programs to help kids at risk.
- Fitness/Nutrition: culinary arts, exercise, nutritional behavior, weight loss, yoga.
- Special Needs: behavioral, educational, emotional, medical and physical options.
- Sports: basketball, baseball, field/ice hockey, golf, horseback riding, lacrosse, running, snowboarding, skiing, soccer, softball, tennis, volleyball, water sports and more.

Strategies/Tips: These options focus primarily on further skill development and ability levels. While some may also address separate ages, many do not. Be sure you understand how socialization and rooming/bunking are handled. Investigate how teens are evaluated for instructional placement. Program time lengths vary but are typically shorter term.

Travel

- Teen Tours: travel in groups of approximately 40 teens to different areas, offering an organized way to visit places a teen may not otherwise experience. Itineraries can be domestic or international and involve multiple destinations, landmark visits, various activities and different forms of transportation. Accommodations can include camping, dorms and/or hotels. Many offer different trip departures for various age groups.

- **Wilderness/Adventure:** travel in smaller groups (usually 12-18 kids) to destinations, domestically or abroad (including exotic or third world locations), focusing on a single type or variety of physical activities. Options can include: backpacking, biking, hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, rafting, rock climbing, sailing, scuba diving, skiing, snorkeling and surfing. Some programs also combine these activities with community service, marine/environmental sciences, archaeology and/or language options. Accommodations are basic and nature-like, involving camping, home and/or hostel stays. Bathroom/shower facilities may be limited or not available. Many offer different trip departures for various ages.

Strategies/Tips: Consider your child's primary reason(s) for travel – socialization, touring, physical interests, cultural exposure. Investigate the types of teens who are typically attracted to these various programs, etc. Some programs enroll kids who are traveling together; others discourage this and/or attract diverse kids due to their focuses. Discuss with your teen ahead of time: the amount and type of travel required; his/her adaptability to changing environments, climates and/or accommodations; interest in the available itineraries and activities; his/her need for individual down time; required and acceptable freedom and restrictions. Trip lengths generally last 3-6 weeks, but vary.

Teens considering adventure type trips need to be comfortable with the program's accommodations, activity intensity and challenge requirements. Discuss with the organization the respective trips' ability levels to ensure the best match for your teen.

Combination Summers

- Teens used to having been away at overnight camp for six+ weeks or those seeking to accomplish multiple objectives, often put together a summer of two or more programs.
- Balance different program types. General programs should be complemented by a specialty focus; sedentary/cerebral programs should be coupled with those involving more physical activity.

Strategies/Tips: Plan out teen summers thinking through the applicability to college, choosing programs that parallel and/or build upon a student's passions pursued personally or in high school (see High School Summer Planner). It is advisable to select and complete first your core program, as well as one which is more general and/or longer. Choose different locations/environments to increase the variability of the experiences.

Teen Program Evaluator

This simple “scorecard” will help you compare the summer programs you’re considering. Use brochures, websites, videos, conversations with the director and references (both parents and teens) to gather information and take notes. You may want to use a simple scoring system, like a 1 to 5 rating, for the most important factors. This will help you narrow down your choices.

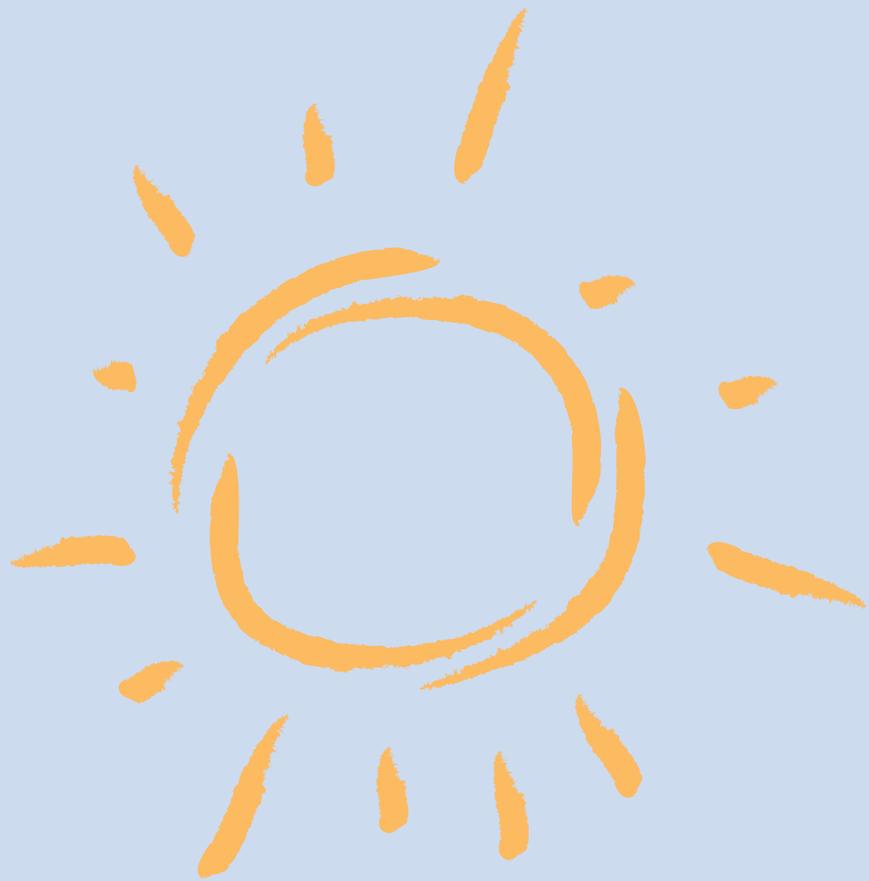
	Program Name	Program Name	Program Name
THE PROGRAM			
Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Education (See Teen Choices for types) o Community Service o Internships o Travel o Sports o Language o Leadership o Adventure o Arts/Drama/Music o Fitness o Substance versus fun o Special needs o Independence/ confidence-building o Other o Value to college applications 			
Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bus or plane o One place versus travel o Urban or rural o Domestic or overseas 			
Session Length			
Facilities/Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dorms/hotels o Family (living) stay o Camping o Food o Bathroom and laundry facilities o Roommate policies o Teen versus staff 			
THE PEOPLE			
Composition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Program and group sizes o Age range o Local/national/international o Co-ed or single-sex o Diverse ethnicity/religions o Successful type(s) 			

	Program Name	Program Name	Program Name
THE PEOPLE (cont'd)			
<p><i>Ownership and Staff</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Individual or group owner (+ tenure) o Adult/teen ratio o Ages o Background/training/screening o Return rate o Role (supervisory/specialists) 			
THE POLICIES (VERY IMPORTANT!)			
<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Phone/e-mail contact/visits o Electronics (e.g., cell phones, tablets) o Behavioral/emotional issues o Meal choices o Travel with friends or alone o Structured versus free time o Organized social time (e.g. night time; by age or group) o Application criteria o Teen responsibilities (luggage, laundry, group tasks, etc.) o Travel supervision (to/from home) 			
<p><i>Behaviors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Relationships o Smoking/alcohol/substance abuse o Spending restrictions/allowances o Curfews o Response to policy violations 			
<p><i>Special Needs (e.g., Diet, Allergies, Medical, Religious, Emotional/Physical)</i></p>			
<p><i>Health/Safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Innoculations/passport required o Infirmary/nearest hospital o Experience with specific conditions o Security and policies 			
THE COSTS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tuition o Transportation o Luggage and linens o Books/supplies o Trips/special activities o Food o Other 			
<i>References</i>			
<i>Director Meeting</i>			
<i>Other</i>			

High School Summer Planner

Using this organizer in conjunction with 'Teen Program Choices', you and your teen can plan out and keep track of each summer's choices/experiences. Be sure to relate these to your teen's objectives, abilities, personality, interests, schedules and college goals. While these summers should be purposeful, choose options that match your teen's needs, not merely those that can be resume enhancers. The key is to build progressive summer experiences that reflect depth and consistency.

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Summer				
Parameters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Objective(s) o Teen's Available Dates o Program Types Considered o References o Selected Program(s) o Location(s) o Session Length(s) o Selected Program Date(s) 				
Required Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Application/Essay o High School Transcript o Recommendations (from whom) o Standardized Tests o Interview o Passport, Birth Certificate o Immunizations o Health Insurance o Medical Physical o Other 				
Due Dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Application o Additional Documents o Course Selection o Departure Date(s) o Arrival Date(s) o Travel Arrangements o Other 				
Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Valuable, Worthwhile o Enjoyable o Not Enjoyable o Met Objectives o Did not Meet Objectives o Recommended Improvements 				
Program Evaluation				



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Special Children & Teens

The camp and summer program selection process can be especially challenging to families with kids and teens that have special needs or food allergies.

How do you decide which camp or program is the most appropriate to meet the special needs? Which one will best meet your goals? Which one will be the safest?

This section is chock full of valuable insights and tips to help guide you in the process of finding the most appropriate summer option for your food-allergy or special child.

Your Everything Summer® Addressing Special Needs

Camp is a wonderful environment for ALL children.

Kids and teens with special needs often involve more research and due diligence. While these children may require a more nurturing setting and attentive staff to meet their needs, parents should be aware that many camps and programs welcome kids with special needs.

Here are some recommended strategies to help parents identify the right camps and programs with the end goal being one of safety and success:

Planning Phase

- Think about the **goals** you and your child have **for the summer**.
- **Involve all parties:** teachers, counselors and therapists in establishing whether your child's special needs can be best addressed in a **mainstream camp/program**, or a **specialized** one.
- **Gather all the available documentation** on your child: school report cards, transcripts, testing, professional evaluations, as well as all test scores as these may be required in specialized or academic programs (both remedial and gifted).
- Look for a **philosophy and purpose to match established goals;** i.e., new/remedial skills, socialization, college preparation, etc.



Special Needs addressed by Camps and Programs:

- ADHD
- Asperger's
- Audio/Sensory
- Behavioral & Emotional
- Developmental
- Food Allergies (see separate chapter)
- Gifted
- Learning Differences
- Loss/Grieving
- Medical
- Physical Disabilities
- Self-Esteem
- Transitions to College/Independent Living
- Weight Loss
- And many others . . .

notes



Useful Tools

Using the following pages to capture information about camps and teen programs is a valuable way to determine which is right for you and your child. Take the time to complete the next section before you choose a camp/program. Input from the director provides valuable insight into their strategic philosophy and general environment.

Once you have completed this section for each camp or teen program that you are interested in, you will be able to compare director feedback, side by side, which allows for a more thorough evaluation of each camp or teen program and its ability to meet the needs of you and your child/teen.

Your Everything Summer® Camp Director Responses

Use these handy pages to jot down director answers to the questions in this Guide. Especially if you're considering several programs, these notes will help you keep track of discussions.

Camp/Program

Director Name

Date/Place of Meeting

Camper "Fit" and Camp Culture:

Staff:

Policies/Roles/Challenges:

Other:

Camp/Program

Director Name

Date/Place of Meeting

Camper "Fit" and Camp Culture:

Staff:

Policies/Roles/Challenges:

Other:

Your Everything Summer® Camp Director Responses (cont'd)

Use these handy pages to jot down director answers to the questions in this Guide. Especially if you're considering several programs, these notes will help you keep track of discussions.

Camp/Program

Director Name

Date/Place of Meeting

Camper "Fit" and Camp Culture:

Staff:

Policies/Roles/Challenges:

Other:

Camp/Program

Director Name

Date/Place of Meeting

Camper "Fit" and Camp Culture:

Staff:

Policies/Roles/Challenges:

Other:

Your Everything Summer[®] Reference Check

Speaking to other families that share similar values and goals to yours is a great way to gather “insider information” about a camp or teen program.

Remember, every child is different, so be sure you weigh these opinions against your family’s unique “personality” and priorities.

Get balanced feedback - and ask tough questions.

REFERENCE NOTES:

Name of camp/program: _____

Contact date: _____

Name of parent: _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

Years of experience with camp/program: _____

Comments:

REFERENCE NOTES:

Name of camp/program: _____

Contact date: _____

Name of parent: _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

Years of experience with camp/program: _____

Comments:

REFERENCE NOTES:

Name of camp/program: _____

Contact date: _____

Name of parent: _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

Years of experience with camp/program: _____

Comments:

REFERENCE NOTES:

Name of camp/program: _____

Contact date: _____

Name of parent: _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

Years of experience with camp/program: _____

Comments:

REFERENCE NOTES:

Name of camp/program: _____

Contact date: _____

Name of parent: _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

Years of experience with camp/program: _____

Comments:

Your Everything Summer® After Camp “De-compression”

After a summer of fun and excitement away, it can be difficult for a child/teen to readjust to home and school life. There are a number of things you can do to make this transition easy and enjoyable.

Be Patient

Kids need some downtime when they return home from camp. Let them catch up on sleep and hang out with their friends and family. Don't over schedule them.

While you may be excited to hear all about their camp/program experiences, don't overwhelm them with questions. Kids need time to think about their summer and organize their thoughts.

Observe

Determine if your child had a positive camp experience. Did he/she make friends or develop new interests? A positive experience can help a child's self-esteem, but a negative one can hurt it. Signs of concern include: moods, changing patterns in activity level, eating and sleeping.

Returning home is emotionally challenging, especially from the final camp year. Camp friendships and memories are strong and lasting. Allow time to visit friends before schools start, to ease the transition.

Encourage Positive Choices

Kids should return home with more independence. They've learned to make their beds, do chores, work as a team, and enjoy the outdoors. Have them continue these learned behaviors at home.

Reinforce lack of dependence on electronic devices. At camp, they had to be creative during idle times. They've learned to have fun without video games or TV. This is the best time to wean kids off of excessive usage.

Prepare for School

Partner with your child to complete summer reading on time, establish guidelines for homework, after school activities, TV/electronic usage and any home responsibilities. Make sure the rules are set before school begins.

Gradually adjust your child's bedtime several days before schools start. Get him/her used to going to bed and waking up earlier.

Give Candid Feedback to the Director

- Review what your child liked and did not like about camp/program – bunkmates, staff, activities, environment, instruction, food choices, trips and down time (or lack of).
- Provide constructive input to the director on your child's experience – positive and negative; they don't always know how your camper feels when he/she returns home, and want to make improvements.
- Meet with the director in person to address concerns.
- Don't be impulsive about switching camps; often small situations can be corrected.
- Conversely, don't re-enroll a truly unhappy child in an inappropriate environment.

Schedule Family Bonding Time

- Arrange vacation or weekend time to learn without pressure about the summer's experiences and accomplishments, its lows and highs.
- Start talking about the changeover from camp to school. New individual and family goals for the coming year and preferred or changed behaviors should be included in the discussion.
- Plan weekly time to discuss family and school matters, to minimize reminders and parental stress.
- Discuss transition to a new school, especially middle or high school. This can be an apprehensive time for adolescents.

Your Everything Summer® Guide & Planner is packed with advice, tools and checklists to help you prepare your child and your family for summer.

"Complete, conscientious, and helpful." - Ilene, mother of two

"I could not believe how thorough this book was. Not a stone was left unturned... as a full-time working mother, this tool is essential." - Jamie, mother of three

More than 70 full-color pages, including:

- The Everything Summer® Inventory: Simple and fun questions that help you set goals for yourself and your family.
- Easy-to-complete checklists for camps and teen programs.
- Questions every parent should ask a director.
- Hints, reminders and interactive tools for dealing with topics like camp readiness, communications, homesickness, shopping, packing, transitioning, reference checking, and more.

Whether you're choosing a camp, deciding on summer activities for a pre-teen or teen, or just need help organizing for summer, you will benefit from this fun and tip-packed book!

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