

Alamance, Caswell, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Orange, Person, Vance and Wake Counties



# Essentials for Choosing

# SUMMER CAMPS



# CAMPS & ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN & TEENS

## Simplify Your Summer Planning!

Soccer camp, art classes, or a sleep-away in the mountains? The choices are many when it comes to summer activities for your children. To make summertime planning easier, Child Care Referral Central, a program of Early Years, has a comprehensive database with classes, camps, summer, and track-out/intersession programs for children in the Triangle and beyond.

For assistance finding a camp or for valuable information on choosing summer camps or other year-round child care, please call Child Care Referral Central. Knowledgeable specialists are available to help you understand national recommendations for health and safety, licensing and accreditation systems, as well as how to recognize high-quality programs. Our services are free and available to everyone.

Ensuring a high-quality summer environment for your children is of the utmost importance and can be just one piece of a year-long balancing act to ensure that your children are in a safe, enriching environment while you work. Get the help of an expert by calling Child Care Referral Central today **(1-855-327-5933)** or visit our online search at

[www.earlyyearsnc.org](http://www.earlyyearsnc.org)

## Your Summer Checklist!

Here are a few steps to follow as you search for the perfect summer setting for your child.

-  **Begin as early as possible.** Many camps start enrolling in February and fill quickly, so it helps to begin looking early.
  
-  **Decide what is important for you and your child.**
  - What activities would most interest your child?
  - What do you and your child want to gain from the camp experience?
  - Will your child need transportation?
  - Can you afford the cost? Does the camp offer scholarships/financial assistance/early bird discounts or multiple child discounts?
  - Will the camp accept a child care subsidy voucher?
  - Write down your needs, wants and wishes.

### Consider different types of programs.

**Residential Camps:** Children generally sleep away from home for one or more weeks and can enjoy day and evening activities. The emphasis of these programs is increasing the independence and self-help skills of campers.

**Day Camps:** Campers arrive in the morning and return home at the end of the day, having enjoyed activities and field trips. There are some half-day options.

**Specialty Camps:** Campers devote a majority of their time to one activity. The staff and facilities are geared toward intensive experiences in activities such as music, sports, art, science or wilderness and adventure.

**Child Care Programs:** Many child care programs offer special activities and adapt their schedules to meet the summer and track-out needs of families. Look for programs licensed by the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education and rated 3- to 5-stars.



**4 Choose the best camp for your child.** A Child Care Referral Specialist can help you create a list of 4-8 camps that meet the criteria you identified in steps 2 & 3. Consider the following questions when narrowing your search:

- Is your child ready for a sleep-away experience? Be sure your child is ready for the length of program you select.
- Will the camp encourage your child to try new things?
- How structured is the program? Is it flexible or highly structured?
- What size camp community will make your child feel comfortable? Sizes can range from 30 to 500 campers.
- Is the camp equipped to handle any type of special needs your child may have? (dietary, medical, physical, behavioral, etc.)
- Does the camp follow American Camp Association (ACA) standards? The ACA is a national association that evaluates camps based on 300 health, safety areas, personnel, transportation and administrative procedures. Not all camps choose to be accredited. If you are interested in a program that is not accredited, you can use these standards found at [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) as a guide in your selection process.

**5 Visit the camp site and talk with the director.** Do your homework & research camps ahead of time.

Some programs offer year-round activities, and it's possible to visit before the summer actually begins.

- Get to know your child's counselors and the camp staff.
- Review the camp's brochures, website, videos and/or DVDs with your child.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. The more you know now, the better your child's camp experience will be.

**6 Ask for references.** Get the names of parents with children the same age as your child who have attended the camp. Ask them:

- What did your child enjoy most about the camp?
- Is there anything you did not like about the camp?
- Would you enroll your child in this camp again?
- May my child talk to your child about the camp experience?



### Additional points to consider

Answering "yes" to most or all of these questions, will increase your child's chance of having a successful summer camp experience:

- \* Is the camp licensed by the North Carolina Division of Child Development & Early Education or accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA)?
- \* Do the camp's counselor- child ratios meet ACA standards? (1:5 for ages 4-5; 1:6 for ages 6-8; 1:8 for ages 9-14; 1:10 for ages 15-17)
- \* Are at least 40-60% of the camp counselors returning from last year?
- \* Is the camp director experienced and hold a higher education degree?
- \* Are camp staff members trained in safety regulations, emergency procedures, behavior management techniques, specific procedures for supervision, and appropriate staff and camper behavior?
- \* Are at least 80% of camp counselors 18 years of age or older?
- \* Are there medical routines and procedures in place for emergencies?
- \* Is there a parent-contact policy, and how is homesickness handled?

# We Can Help!

1-855-327-5933

**¿Buscando campamentos de verano o una guardería?**

*Llamenos! Hablamos español.*

Para facilitar su planes de verano, Early Years tiene un base de datos exhaustivo que describe las clases, campamentos de verano, y programas fuera del ciclo escolar para niños en el Triángulo y más allá.

Para asistencia usando esta guía, e información adicional de alto valor en como escoger un campamento u otro programa de cuidado infantil de ciclo completo, por favor llame al Servicio de Child Care Referral Central o visitenos al [www.earlyyearsnc.org](http://www.earlyyearsnc.org).

**Don't get overwhelmed  
Let us do the hard work for you!**

## Convenient!

Your customized list of camps can be sent to you by email or mail. Email [Referral@earlyyearsnc.org](mailto:Referral@earlyyearsnc.org) to request your list.

## Customized!

A Referral Specialist is available to help you navigate your summer options!

Speak to our trusted experts and get specific program information on: dates & hours of operation, camp cost, camp specialties and other features that are important to you!

## Online!

Conduct your own search at [www.earlyyearsnc.org](http://www.earlyyearsnc.org)

Contact us Monday – Friday  
8:00 am – 5:00 pm  
**1-855-327-5933**

Our referral services are FREE to everyone.

## Social Media!

Find us on Facebook and Instagram!



## Early Years

**Helping children get the best start in life for more than 50 years**

Early Years is a nationally recognized nonprofit leading efforts to strengthen accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education by providing support for families, communities and the workforce.

Early Years provides free referral services to families seeking child care, technical assistance & training to child care businesses, and educational scholarships and salary supplements to child care professionals.

Headquartered in the Triangle Area of North Carolina, Early Years is a leader and advocate in child care services on the local, state and national level. We collaborate with many partners, businesses and stakeholders to address needs within the child care system.

For more information about **Early Years** or to make a donation, visit [www.earlyyearsnc.org](http://www.earlyyearsnc.org).

**Servicios disponibles en español.**