Tips for finding camps for first time campers



If you're reading this, then congrats!  Your child has reached a special time in their development when they are ready to branch out on their own a little bit, be more independent and of course venture out to explore their first summer camp experience!

Reaching this milestone is indeed a big step!  You may be asking yourself a few questions:

* Where do you go from here?
* How can you find the right camp?
* What if my child hates the summer camp experience?
* Are they really old enough to attend summer camp without me?

**Let's start with your fears**

It's natural to have our own fears.  It is not okay however to project those onto our kids.  You don't want to "talk your child into being afraid" but showing that you are overly hesitant about summer camp.  So do your homework and know how to get the answers that you need.

**Ask your child if THEY think they are ready**

There are camps for children starting as young as 6.  However, not all kids will be ready for this. Sleep-over camps generally are for older children but in some cases, sleep over-camps can be available for kids as young as 10.  If your child has never slept over at a friend’s house or has only been in situations where they are cared for by close friends and family then overnight camps might not be the right choice right away.

Instead look for a day camp that allows you to drop off and pick up your child each day if you sense that they are a little shy or fearful.  This type of camp is great for "getting your feet wet" and of course it is perfect for first time campers simply for the reason that you generally have to do no more than pack a lunch.

**How do I know what theme to pick?**

Again you'll want to ask them what they are interested in.  Letting a child pick the theme gives them control and helps them to feel more comfortable when attending.

When in doubt, pick a general camp with multiple activities and experiences.  You can't go wrong with variety!  Plus it might spark a new interest!

**What tools are available on Summer Camp Live to help me?**

From [virtual camp fairs](http://youtu.be/PqDURvOBnXA) to articles, to opportunities to ask camps your most important questions. You can also see what each camp offers and get other information like start dates and pricing. Summer Camp Live makes it easy to do the research.

**About the author**

[Richel Newborg](http://www.summercamplive.com/blog/tips-finding-camps-first-time-campers/google.com/%2BRichelNewborg) is a mom to three and a former Child Care Director.  She has written curriculum and planned camp programs for children ages 6-18 years old.  Richel has also been a presenter/instructor for dance, color guard and music camps for over 20 years.