



cdca
Child Day Care Association

**SUMMER SCHOOL AGE CARE
TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Child Day Care Association
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The community resources included are solely for the purpose of providing community resource information and are not recommendations or referrals listed within the CCR&R referral database. It is the responsibility of the child's guardian to assess any services available based on the individual needs of the child/family.

United Way
of Greater St. Louis



The need for school-age care changes during the summer months when school is not in session. There is a wide range of choices in summer programs from established child care facilities to art camps to staying home alone or with a caregiver.

- **Child care and school based facilities:** Some school programs run year round and are able to extend their before and after school-age care to accommodate summer and other holidays. Some child care facilities offer special programs for school-age children during the summer months. Several area private schools hold summer camps, which are open to the public.
- **Parks and recreation departments:** Check your neighborhood parks and recreation departments for summer programming. Most of these programs are part-time, but some offer extended hours.
- **In-home care:** An in-home caregiver may be employed over the summer to care for school-agers in your home. Check with local colleges or nanny placement agencies, place an ad in a local paper, or talk to friends and neighbors.
- **Special interest camps:** are offered by lots of different groups including scouts, religious groups, cultural organizations (museums, libraries, music, dance, theater groups). There are many popular camps in the St. Louis area and they fill up early!

THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. **Neither the state of Missouri nor the state of Illinois license summer programs.**

A program which is already licensed and offers a summer program should already meet licensing standards. For questions about licensing call:

MO Dept of Health and Senior Services, Section for Child Care 314-877-0210
Illinois Division of Child and Family Services 618-394-2100

2. A special plan may be required to cover those weeks immediately after school ends and immediately before school begins; camps are often closed during those weeks.
3. Keep your child's interest in mind and include him or her in the decision-making process. Some summer camps offer 1 or 2 week programs. You may want to use several programs to give your child a variety of experiences.
4. Camps can be difficult to visit, but if possible try to visit the camp when it is in operation before you make your final decision. This will give you and your child the opportunity to see the program and philosophy in action. Because camps do not operate year-round, this may mean visiting the camp the summer before you need to enroll your child in the program.

HOME ALONE

There is no magic age when it becomes acceptable to leave a child home alone. If your child is mature and responsible you might be able to plan with your child a balance of activities in the community that can help you determine your child's readiness to stay at home alone and to prepare your child if you decide he or she is ready.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering is a good way for older youth to be productive and active during the summer months. Some places to look for volunteer opportunities are: churches, and synagogues, United Way, YMCA and YWCA, child care centers, neighborhood and community groups, and cultural institutions.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON SUMMER CAMPS

- The American Camping Association accredits camps and offers information on overnight and day camps. Call 1-800-428-CAMP.
- Your child's school or child care facility may offer a summer program or refer you to other possibilities.
- Camp fairs are often held in the early spring; various camps and programs are on hand to answer your questions and provide information.
- Local media publish Camp guides.
- Call the St. Louis city and county parks departments for information on summer programs they offer.
- For children with special needs start with the school or program they already attend. Guidance counselors often have information on camps as do the school districts that operate special education or inclusion programs. The public tax agencies also offer information to support individuals with disabilities: in St. Louis City, the St. Louis Developmental Disabilities Resources Board; in St. Louis County, the Productive Living Board; and in St. Charles County, the Developmental Disabilities Resource Board.

SUMMER PROGRAM CHECKLIST

The Program

- Do the hours fit our schedule? Is the program flexible, does it offer extended hours or part time hours if you need them?
- What activities are offered? Will they interest your child and be appropriate for his or her interests and skills?
- What is the daily schedule? Is there a mix of quiet and active times in the schedule?
- What is the fee for the program? Are there additional fees for field trips, etc?
- Are the children grouped according to age, especially if the program enrolls 6 to 12+ years old children?
- Are there different programs for different age children and are they appropriate?
- Are meals provided or do parents provide meals?
- What percentages of campers return each year?
- What is the programs overall philosophy?
- Is the camp accredited, or is it inspected? By whom?
- What are the accreditation / inspection requirements?



Parent Involvement

- Can parents visit the camp any time?
- Can parents visit the camp in advance?
- Are there special activities that include parents?
- How will the camp communicate with parents?
- Is input from parents encouraged?

The Facility

- Does the camp seem safe, well maintained and clean?
- Is the outdoor space large enough for sports and activities?
- Is the indoor space large enough for all children in bad weather?
- If food is served, is the kitchen clean?
- Does the camp provide transportation? If so, what is the transportation system?



The Staff

- What are the training and educational requirements for the staff working the program?
- How many children does each counselor supervise? Are there enough counselors to care for the children?
- What are the ages of the counselors?
- Is additional staff available for field trips? Is there a lifeguard on duty during water activities?
- Are there written health, safety and emergency rules?
- What is the camp policy when a child becomes ill or has an accident?
- Is someone on staff trained to handle medical emergencies?
- What percentages of the staff return each year?



(Selections from Work/Family Direction's "Choosing a Summer Day Camp", were used for this checklist with our thanks)