



Is My Child Ready for Summer Camp?

1) Is your child able take care of their personal hygiene?

Young children may need their counselors to remind them to brush their teeth and take showers, but it's important that they know how to do this on their own. Camp teaches a lot about independence, but there are some basic building blocks that children must already possess, and showering on their own is one of the ACA's key indicators they are mature enough to handle an overnight camp.

2) Has your child has had successful sleepovers away from home?

The ability to successfully navigate sleepovers outside of the home is a great sign that campers may be ready for overnight camp! Ask your child and the caregiver to determine how positive the experience was for them. Did your child enjoy it? Were they able to sleep? Did they show signs of high anxiety or any regressive behavior? Even if there were minor hiccups along the way, if your child has had successful sleepovers then they may be ready for camp!

3) Can your child can successfully navigate new situations?

If your child has been able to adapt to new teachers/coaches or new after-school activities, these are all indications that they can easily get into the groove of camp. It's still OK if your child is cautious at first in new situations! Our staff are specifically trained in community building and do an excellent job with making sure everyone feels a part of the cabin!

4) Is your child is interested in trying and learning new things?

We are all creatures of habit, but camp is filled with opportunities to make new friends and try new things. Whether it's sleeping in a bunk, trying a new sport or a new food, or learning a song, new experiences can quickly become fun and familiar routines, but in order for this to happen, kids have to be willing to try new things. We all (even adults) have varying levels of willingness to try new things, and that's OK! At Camp Lake Stephens we operate using the concept of "Zones of Participation". Campers who may be on the side or participating in less direct ways (through cheering on or helping out staff, etc) are considered to be participating just as much as a camper in the middle of every activity! All that matters is that campers are challenging themselves in some way! If your child is interested in trying new things or has a since of adventure or exploration then they might be ready for a full camp experience!

Here are a few more resources that might help you determine whether or not your child is ready for camp!

<https://www.acacamps.org/parents-families/planning-camp/coping-homesickness-camp>

<https://www.acacamps.org/blog/whats-best-age-camp>

<https://www.acacamps.org/parents-families/planning-camp/expert-advice>