

Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services

CYSS Mission: Support readiness and well-being of geographically dispersed Families by reducing the conflict between parental responsibilities and mission requirements.

It's not too early to start thinking about Summer Camps



An experience at camp can be life changing, fostering quality bonds between peers and **building resiliency in your child**. According to the American Camping Association, “a quality camp experience provides children with the opportunity to learn powerful lessons in community, character-building, skill development, and healthy living.”

Benefits of Attending Camp

Research has indicated a series of more in depth benefits to attending camp.

- ◆ Cultural enrichment: camp: has always been a unique developmental environment that weaves global citizenship with other outcomes such as critical thinking skills, leadership, and character development. If choosing a camp with an emphasis on cultural enrichment, your child might find themselves bunking with a fellow camper from a different country. Many camps will capitalize on this opportunity to learn about diversity in order to teach children cultural empathy, understanding, and recognize the beauty in differences.
- ◆ History-based camps: campers who attended a history-based camp thought learning about history was more fun at camp than at school, and those that enjoyed learning about history set higher academic goals for themselves. Their knowledge on history increased during camp and they reported using their knowledge in class. Campers placed a higher importance on doing well in school after attending camp and some even indicated that camp had triggered their interest in a college career.
- ◆ Environmental Benefits: Campers saw value in taking care of the natural environment after attending camp. The experience of living in a rural environment encouraged campers to want to preserve natural environments.

How to find the right camp?

When trying to decide on the right camp for your child, it is important to evaluate the needs of your child. To connect to a Military Connected Camp for your child, contact a CYSS Specialist listed on the Contact Page of the newsletter. Consider his or her age, gender, their mental and physical development, as well as their desires and interests. Military children might express an interest in connecting more with other children, or they might have a great desire to learn one or more skills. It is important to talk with your child about the options available and get a sense of what they want out of a camp and what you, the parent, wants for them. Turn the page to find a comprehensive guide to choosing the right camp.



This information has been provided by
Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.

For more information on resources and programs, please visit:
[HTTPS://WWW.ARFP.ORG/CYSS](https://www.arfp.org/cyss)



Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services

CYSS Mission: Support readiness and well-being of geographically dispersed Families by reducing the conflict between parental responsibilities and mission requirements.

When thinking about sending your child to camp, consider the following factors:

- Age:** **The child's age is very important when determining whether a child is ready for residential/overnight camps.** Generally children under the age of 7 are not ready for residential camps, and a day camp is a great way to prep them for overnight camps.
- Location:** Camps that are local can reduce travel costs and makes it easier to visit. A camp located further away may offer geographical experiences that may not be available closer to home. They can also promote a sense of independence in the child, which is something you can decide if your child is ready for that independence.
- Length of camp:** You should also consider if you would like to drop off and pick up your child everyday, pick them up at end of the week, or if your child is ready for a camp that extends longer than a week.
- Co-ed, girls only, and boys only:** Each has their own positives and negatives. You and your family should determine what your child is ready for and what best meets the needs of your child.
- Traditional or specialty:** **Traditional camps don't usually have a specific focus and offer a wide range of activities like archery, rock climbing, swimming, and more.** Specialty camps offer traditional activities, but they also have a main focus. For example "Basketball camp" would focus on basketball, but still offer opportunities for other activities.

Parents should look for a camp that offers various programs that are organized for the many ages of campers attending. Always keep the safety and well being of your child in mind and make sure that the camp has staff trained to guide campers at building skills, making choices, and trying new adventures. Achievement is a major factor for children at camp so ensure the camp is filled with opportunities for achievement and skill building.

Where to Look?

American Camping Association	www.acacamps.org
Army Reserve Camping Opportunities	http://www.arfp.org/cyss.php
Camp Erin, Moyer Foundation Bereavement Camps	http://www.moyerfoundation.org/programs/CampErin_About.aspx
2015 Dod-USDA Partnership for Military Families Child & Youth Reintegration Support Camps	http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/military-family/dod_usda/2015-military-camps/2015-camps/index.html
Military Teen Adventure Camp	https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure_camps/campsloc.html
Specialty Camps for Children	http://kidshealth.org/parent/system/ill/finding_camp_special_needs.html
Kids & Teen Summer Camps Guide	http://www.allensguide.com/
Special Needs Camps	https://www.seriousfunnetwork.org

When Does Registration for Camp Begin?

Depending on which camp you've decided on, registration can begin as early as the summer before. This is the best time to start researching which camps are most appealing to you and your child. There can be benefits to registering early as well. The less-involved camps (day only, local) have open registration through spring months; some even up until the week before they start. The best scenario is to identify which camp you'd like to attend and identify the registration process from there.

Useful Tips for Parents

It is important to discuss with your child the expectations you have of them and the expectations that the camp has of them. These might include: **treating others with respect and following camp rules.** Once you've established a set of guidelines for your child, other information is good to address. For example: what to do in an emergency, what if you get lost away from the camp, and how to contact home if need be. Parents should also make sure to be available if the camp needs to get a hold of them at any time.

Resource: American Camping Association



This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.

For more information on resources and programs, please visit: [HTTPS://WWW.ARFP.ORG/CYSS](https://www.arfp.org/cyss)

