



FINDING THE RIGHT JEWISH CAMP FOR YOUR CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Parent's Guide



The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia mobilizes financial and volunteer resources to address the communities' most critical priorities locally, in Israel and around the world.

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In Partnership with the
NEUBAUER FAMILY FOUNDATION



Jewish camp is more than just camp.

Summer overnight camp is about so much more than campfires and color war. It's a chance for kids to explore who they are and who they want to become. At Jewish camp, ruach (spirit) is part of every activity — from dancing to hitting a home run — allowing campers to explore their connection to the Jewish community while having the summer of their lives. There are a number of regional overnight camps, where the majority of the area's campers go. Sending your kids to one of these camps will make life-long friendships. Campers are bunkmates and team players, artists and athletes, creative problem-solvers and blossoming leaders, developing independence and communication skills they can use their entire lives.



Different camps are able to accommodate different needs. Here are the opportunities a camp may be able to offer:

- ❑ **Inclusion** refers to a camp setting that campers with and without disabilities live in the same cabins together and attend all of the same activities.
- ❑ **Camp within a camp** means that campers with disabilities live in cabins with other campers with disabilities and attend programs specially geared towards campers with special needs. They usually spend some percentage of their day interacting with other campers without disabilities.
- ❑ **Camp for children with disabilities** is a camp program where all of the children at camp have a disability and have been determined to need extra support at camp.
- ❑ **Vocational training programs** are usually a job coaching program for teens over the age of 16.

With over 155 camps to choose from, One Happy Camper's *Find a Camp* tool makes it easy to discover camps you and your kids will love, based on information such as where you live, your child's grade, and the type of activities your child is looking for. Visit onehappycamper.org/findacamp to get started!

Need help narrowing down your options? Read on for a guided camp search and a list of camps that cater to your area.

Take a few minutes and think about the type of environment in which your child thrives. What kind of program will benefit them the most? What kind of experience are you and your child expecting from the summer? The right camp for your child becomes an extension of your home and your family's values.

START WITH YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

Finding the right camp is often about finding a community your child can be part of for summers to come. There are no right or wrong answers. Here are some questions to help in your family's camp search.

- ☐ Do I want a traditional camp that gives my child a wide variety of experiences, or do I want to select a specialty camp that focuses on a particular activity or set of skills?
- ☐ What size camp will make my child feel comfortable?
- ☐ Do I want the camp to be affiliated with a particular movement or organization?
- ☐ What session length will appeal to my child and to our family plans for the summer?
- ☐ What type of location are we looking for? (Consider options like mountains and lake-front, but also distance from home.)
- ☐ What is my budget for camp tuition?
- ☐ Do I want a camp where my child will live with and attend activities with peers without disabilities; or a camp where my child will spend a portion but not their entire day with peers without disabilities; or a camp where all campers have a disability?
- ☐ Do I want a camp that offers a vocational training program?
- ☐ What level of independence will my child be given at camp?

Once you have thought a bit about what you are looking for, talk to your One Happy Camper representative or visit OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp to start selecting the camps you are interested in.

Questions to Consider

ABOUT THE CAMP

- ☐ What are the camp's values and philosophies? What makes the camp special?
- ☐ Is the camp co-ed? What is the interaction like between different ages and different genders?
- ☐ What is the size of the camp? How are the campers grouped? How many kids are in each bunk?
- ☐ What percent of campers return each year?
- ☐ What is the total cost of the camp? Are there specialty programs or trips that cost extra? Will I need to provide spending money?
- ☐ How does the camp ensure campers' safety and security? How is security handled out of camp?
- ☐ How are behavioral and disciplinary problems handled?
- ☐ What is the camp's technology policy?
- ☐ Does the camp offer transportation to and/or from camp?
- ☐ What is the minimum age of the counselors? What kind of staff training is provided?
- ☐ What training is offered for staff working with campers with disabilities?
- ☐ What is the camper to staff ratio?

JUDAISM

- ☐ Is the camp affiliated with any movement?
- ☐ How are Jewish experiences incorporated into the camp program? (i.e., Shabbat, services, rituals, Hebrew, etc.)
- ☐ Are there special accommodations made so that my child will be able to have a meaningful experience of Shabbat services or Judaic programming?

FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING

- ☐ What facilities are there, such as a lake or pool?
- ☐ What are the sleeping arrangements? Are showers/bathrooms in the cabins or in another building?
- ☐ What is the schedule like? Is the program structured or does it emphasize elective and individual choices? In what areas does the camp focus on skill-building?
- ☐ What type of instructional swim program is offered? Is it required? Until what age?
- ☐ What other instructional or specialty programs are offered?
- ☐ What types of programs and facilities are available in the event of bad weather?
- ☐ How does the camp program meet individual needs and differences?
- ☐ Do you offer assistance with showering, dressing, and toileting?
- ☐ How do you accommodate children who need a bit more sleep than allowed in the schedule?

FOOD AND MEDICAL

- ☐ What types of food are offered at camp? Can food allergies or other dietary needs be accommodated? Are snacks offered throughout the day? What if my child has a very limited diet?
- ☐ Is the kitchen kosher?
- ☐ How does the camp handle individual medical needs? What medical facilities are nearby?

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- ☐ What contact will I be able to have with my camper while they are at camp?
- ☐ Will I be able to speak to a staff member while my child is at camp?
- ☐ What information (newsletters, emails, photos, calls) do you share with parents during the summer?
- ☐ Can the camp describe in detail what it does for a child with disabilities?
- ☐ Will the camp share information about friendships that are made at camp so that they can be maintained throughout the year?



EXPLORE SEVERAL CAMPS

Every camp is different. From philosophy to facilities to food, there are as many unique approaches as there are camps. Asking questions, talking to staff, and getting familiar with what several different camps have to offer is the best way to narrow down which one is right for your child.

The best way to get started is to visit each camp's website, where you can find photos, maps or virtual tours of the camp facilities, and sample daily schedules. Websites will also inform you of key information about the directors and senior staff members, important dates, and registration information. From there, you can contact the camp, speak to the director, schedule a visit with a camp staffer when they are in your area, set up a time to meet the parent of a current camper, or visit the camp if that is an option.

Jewish Overnight Camp for Special Needs Campers

Camp Harlam (Union for Reform Judaism)

Intellectual, developmental, physical, neurological and behavioral disabilities
301 City Avenue, Ste. 110, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
Winter: 610.668.0423
Summer: 570.629.1390
cmiller@urj.org
harlam.urjcamps.org

Camp JRF, South Sterling, PA (Reconstructionist Movement)

Developmental disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, cognitive delays, developmental challenges, moderate speech and/or processing issues, and some forms of physical disabilities
1299 Church Road, Wyncote, PA 19095
Winter: 215.576.5681;
Summer: 570.676.9291
jsternburg@rrc.edu
campjrf.org

Camp Kaylie, Wurtsboro, NY

Developmental and intellectual disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities
4510 16th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11204
Winter: 718.686.3261
Summer: 845.888.5008
info@campkaylie.org
campkaylie.org

Camp Ramah in the Poconos (Conservative Movement)

Campers ages 12-17 with a wide range of disabilities, including developmental and intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and neurological impairments
2100 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
Winter: 215.885.8556
Summer: 570.798.2504
orleek@ramahpoconos.org
campramah.org

Camp Simcha, Glen Spey, NY

Free camps open to children battling cancer, chronic hematological disorders, or other debilitating chronic conditions
151 West 30th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001
Contact: Rivkah Reichmann, Associate Director
Winter: 212.699.663
877.CHAIL.LIFE; or 845.856.1432
Summer: 888.756.1432
reichmann@chailifeline.org
specialcampsimcha.org

Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake, Verbank, NY

Campers are assessed on a case-by-case basis
575 8th Avenue, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10018
Winter: 917.595.1500
Summer: 845.677.3411
renana.benbassat@youngjudaea.org
cyjsproutlake.org

Eden Village Camp, Putnam Valley, NY

Campers must be fully independent and are assessed on a case-by-case basis
392 Dennytown Road, Putnam Valley, NY 10579
877.397.3336 | welcome@edenvillagecamp.org
edenvillagecamp.org

Round Lake Camp (NJ Y Camps), Milford, PA

Autism Spectrum Disorder, intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and other disabilities
21 Plymouth Street, Fairfield, NJ 07004
Winter: 973.575.3333; Summer: 570.296.8596
rlc@njycamps.org
roundlakecamp.org

Yachad-National Jewish Council for Disabilities (Orthodox Union); Programs offered at: Camp Moshava Indian Orchard, Camp Nesher, Camp Shoshanim, Camp Morasha

Various disabilities
11 Broadway, 13th Floor, New York, NY, 10004
212.613.8229 | yachadsummer@ou.org
njcd.org/summer-programs/camper-programs



About Tuition

We recognize that paying for camp can be difficult or even impossible for some families. The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia is doing all we can to make camp affordable for every family in our area. There are two main programs we offer to help make camp affordable: One Happy Camper incentive grants for first-time campers regardless of financial need, and need-based scholarships for returning campers.

First-time campers may be eligible for a One Happy Camper grant of up to \$1,000. Visit jewishphilly.org/camp to learn more.

Many camps offer early registration incentives or sibling discounts. Scholarships may be available from your camp, synagogue, or other Jewish organizations. Visit jewishcamp.org/camper-scholarships and jewishphilly.org/camp for additional information.

About One Happy Camper (OHC)

OHC provides grants of up to \$1,000 to families with children attending nonprofit Jewish overnight camp for the first time. OHC is a program of the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC), and funded locally by the Jewish Federation and the Neubauer Family Foundation. Campers can receive either a \$700 incentive grant for a first-time camp experience lasting 12-18 consecutive days OR a \$1,000 incentive grant for a first-time camp experience lasting 19+ consecutive days.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A ONE HAPPY CAMPER GRANT?

1. Once you’ve found the right camp for your child, register directly with the camp.
2. Apply online for a One Happy Camper grant. Once your child’s registration at camp has been confirmed, visit OneHappyCamper.org and complete our simple online application form.
3. Check back in two to four weeks. Your local One Happy Camper administrator will contact you once your application has been approved, or you can check your status online by logging in and selecting “Track My Grant.” Once your application has been approved, funds will be paid directly to the camp and will be credited toward your balance. Funds are paid to the camp each spring.

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A ONE HAPPY CAMPER GRANT, TYPICALLY YOUR CHILD MUST BE:

- ☐ Registered for an approved overnight camp from the FJC website for the first time for either 12-18 days or 19+ consecutive days.
- ☐ In any grade up to entering grade 12.
- ☐ A resident of one of the following counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery or Philadelphia.
- ☐ Not currently participating in a daily immersive Jewish experience, such as a Jewish day school or immersion program (however, a select number of OHC grants for day school students who want to attend Camp Harlam or Camp Ramah in the Poconos for the first time are available through the OHC system).
- ☐ Not receiving a OHC grant and need-based scholarship support in the same season. If a camper is eligible for a OHC grant, they must apply for that option in their first year.

Visit onehappycamper.org for more information and to register.

Visit jewishphilly.org/camp for more information about need-based scholarships and deadlines.



Need-based Camp Scholarships

If your child is not eligible for a OHC grant (e.g. they attend a day school or are not a first-time camper), you are encouraged to apply for a need-based scholarship. Families can apply online at jewishphilly.org/camp.

Families who are deemed eligible may receive between 10% and 30% of the cost of camp depending on their family's income and the cost of camp. Campers must identify as Jewish and be between the ages of 5 and 19. Campers also must live in one of the following counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or Philadelphia.

