

5 Signs Your Child is Ready for Overnight Camp



1 Your child has demonstrated success with sleepovers and falling asleep without your help.

Camp shouldn't be the first time your child is sleeping away from home. When your child gets practice with sleepovers with family members and friends, it helps give them the confidence needed to feel positive about spending nights outside of their usual comfort zone. They learn to think ahead for what's needed and pack a bag, ask for things they might need, and especially go to sleep without you there. If your child wants to bring a special item from home, they're in good company – even the most seasoned campers bring their treasured stuffies and other comfort items!

2 Your child can independently conduct daily tasks.

Your child will return home from camp with greater independence, but they should arrive at camp willing and able to do each step of tasks with some prompting and reminders. Think about showering – for example, they'll need the skills to adjust the water temperature and know how to wash their hair and entire body. When navigating a buffet-style dining environment, they'll need to choose foods they like, potentially ask questions, and carry a filled plate to their seat (camp is a great place to try new foods since choices are somewhat limited). The same goes for brushing their teeth, putting clothes away, etc.

3 Your child has the stamina and resilience for an activities-filled day and communal living.

Just like at home and school, there will be moments at camp when things aren't going the way your child would like. We know that constant stimulation can be tiring, so camps build rest time into each day and week's schedule to help! It's important that you have confidence in your child's ability to manage typical moments of frustration.

4 Your child usually sleeps through the night without bedwetting accidents.

If your child has bedwetting accidents on occasion, camp staff can work with you to put a plan in place that your child feels comfortable with and that can work at camp. This is more common than most parents think, and a less-than-perfect track record shouldn't be a dealbreaker.

5 Your child wants to come to camp!

Often, when kids come to you with a desire to go to overnight camp, it's a sign that not only are they curious about attending, but also that they are truly ready. Asking them about why they are interested can give you more information to feel ready to take this step.

Every child is different. Make sure you feel confident that the camper care team at the summer camps you're considering can answer your questions and meet your needs. Camper care teams may include educators, therapists, counselors, and other professionals who know camp and kids. Don't hesitate to ask for support—collaborating with parents is how everyone can have a successful summer!

The URJ has 14 summer camps across the U.S., including specialty programs in STEM, the arts, and outdoor adventures. [Learn more about URJ camps.](#)

