

8 Reasons to Consider Sending Your Kids to Sleepaway Camp

A break from the norm can benefit kids and families.



By Barbara Greenberg, Contributor April 7, 2017, at 6:00 a.m.

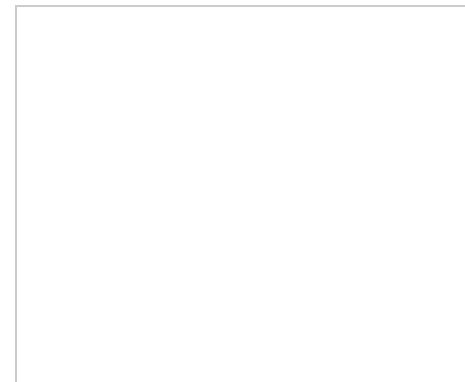
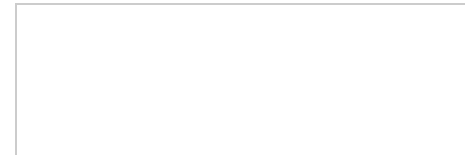


Sleepaway camps give kids a chance be independent and bond with peers while enjoying activities like kayaking. (iStockphoto)

FREQUENTLY, FRIENDS AND clients alike tell me about the great experiences their children have had at [sleepaway camps](#).

Kids as young as 5 and as old as 16 attend the camps, which are usually in a remote and bucolic setting, with kids grouped by age and sex. Campers live, play and sleep together in a cabin, often sharing bunk beds, and the camps typically last anywhere from two weeks to two months.

At camp, kids have the opportunity to follow a fun schedule that involves things like participating in [outdoor activities](#) and doing crafts as well as playing games and various sports. They're supervised by and live in a cabin with their counselors, usually young adults who guide them through the day. Most sleepaway camps continue to have a no [electronics](#) policy, which the kids get used to very quickly. Imagine that.



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Certainly, sleepaway camp is not for every child. Some kids have too much [separation anxiety](#) to live away from home. Similarly, some parents have too much anxiety to be apart from their kids. But for those kids and families for whom sleepaway camps are a good fit, the benefits are many.

Here are some reasons I'd recommend considering sleepaway camps:

Kids learn to be independent. When kids are able to successfully spend time away from parents it can help them develop autonomy. Many kids come home from camp with increased self-esteem, because they've had the opportunity to tackle new challenges on their own.

Children often have an opportunity to reinvent themselves. They may be [shy](#) at school but can become both popular and more outgoing at camp. Who doesn't long for the opportunity to try on a new and more fulfilling role?

Kids have a chance to make deep connections. When kids live together, they have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with peers. Those who spend time away at camp frequently describe making lifelong friends.

[Read: [How to Raise Resilient Kids.](#)]

Campers develop new skills. By trying out activities such as crafts, kayaking and drama, kids have a chance to expand what they're able to do. Particularly for kids who may feel excluded from some activities during the school year, camps provide an opportunity to be included – and to hone in on skills kids may not know they have. And we all know what a wonderful experience it is to be included.

Kids learn to respect and appreciate others' differences. By living together, kids learn how to get along with peers who may be different from them. At the very least, campers become better at negotiating social interactions. What alternative do they have when they live together?

Kids learn about responsibility at camp. Tasks are assigned and there are expectations to keep the cabins clean. There is also peer pressure to work as a team. This, in my opinion, is peer pressure at its very best.

[See: [10 Ways to Raise a Giving Child.](#)]

Children get used to [living without electronics](#). This gives kids the opportunity to learn how to enjoy free time without staring at a screen. It's a great chance for kids to read a book or to seek out a friend for a nature walk or just to chat.

Camp can help the whole family combat cabin fever. Kids and parents get a break from each other, which reduces [stress](#) and can be very revitalizing.

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