



Last Minute Summer Camp Plans

Have you waited too long to find a summer camp for your child? Summer is almost here and you may be faced no plans for your child during the 10–12 week summer vacation. You've got to work, most of it anyway. What do you do when all the summer camps are full?

Summer camps have **waiting lists**, but there ARE cancellations. Get your name on them and call frequently, to see if you've made your way up the list. Make these friendly calls and try to establish a rapport with the person at the camp who offers spots. Sometimes they don't go in order. Vacancies are more likely in late summer when most families take their vacations so you increase your chances if you take your family outing early.

Other Options - you may need to combine together two or three camp alternatives to get you through the summer.

- ***Short-term, Specialized Camps***
Consider a week at one a sports, music, magic, theater or computer camp Local parent magazines are a good source for organizations that offer these programs. Your community college might even have a camp.
- ***Summer School***
Older children might enroll in summer school, perhaps at a school other than their own. Many private schools offer summer classes to children who are not part of their regular student body.
- ***Family Child Care***
Younger children, five-year-olds for example, may be able to return to their old family child care home, an easy transition where everything and everyone is familiar.
- ***Relative care***
Can your child visit his grandparents for a week or two? Or your sister and her kids? Or can a grandparent stay with you and baby-sit?
- ***Babysitters***
You may not want a babysitter as a long term caregiver for your child, but for a few weeks in summer, it might be perfect. This would probably be a more relaxed child care situation than with an adult caregiver but summer is supposed to be a relaxed time anyway. Understand the strengths and limitations of the babysitter you hire. Don't rely on the babysitter to plan activities; come up with suggestions and details (library, parks, and museums).
- ***Home Camp***
Join other parents in a round robin home-based camp for four-five families. This is how it works: each family is responsible for a week (take comp time, vacation time, two-parent families can split up the week, etc.) and plan activities for the

children. You have them for one week and another family has them all the next—and you go back to work. You may be caring for five or more kids at a time, which is a lot, but it's only for one week. Plan sports and crafts activities for your house and yard; take everyone on outings (nature walks, art exhibits, and science museum). Parents should decide beforehand how you'll handle food and drinks, hours of operation, and emergencies. And, except for outings and materials, the cost can be low!

Keep in mind that Last minute summer planning can often turn out to be a good thing. You may be able to weave a tapestry of weeks that introduces your child to new worlds. Don't give up because your first choice isn't possible.

Resources include:

- **Yale WorkLife Program**
Phone: (203) 432-8069
Web site: <http://www.yale.edu/hronline/worklife/cccamps.html>
- **Yale Sports Camps**
Phone: (203) 432-2488
Web site: <http://yalebulldogs.collegesports.com/camps/yale-camps.html>
- **Yale Peabody Museum Summer Camp**
Phone: (203) 432-6646
Web site: <http://www.peabody.yale.edu/events/camps.html>
- **Yale Corinthian Yacht Club Summer Sailing programs**
Phone: (203) 488-9330
Web site: www.yale.edu/yeyc/summer
- **Yale Polo and Equestrian Center**
Phone: (203) 432-1431
Web site: <http://yalebulldogs.collegesports.com/links/riding.html>
- **2-1-1 Child Care Infoline:** www.childcareinfoline.org/summercamps.asp
- **American Camping Association of New England**
Phone: (508) 647-2267
Web site: www.acane-camps.org

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