

How to Find a Quality Summer Program for Your Child

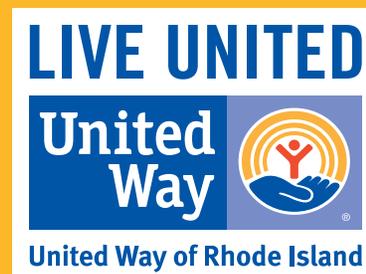
What Should Parents Look For?¹

- Balanced programming with daily opportunities for reading, math, cultural enrichment, and recreation
- High-interest, engaging activities
- Positive interactions between youth and caring adults
- A safe, structured learning environment
- Personalized attention / low student-to-staff ratios
- Bilingual staff to support English-language learners
- In specialized camps, such as those for students with learning disabilities, trained staff that includes psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, teachers, or speech and language pathologists
- CPR- and First Aid-certified staff

Parents often have to choose a summer program months before having the chance to visit. On the back of this sheet are some questions that parents or guardians can ask ahead of time to help discern the quality of a summer program, and the appropriateness of the program for their child's needs and interests. Ask as many of these questions as you feel comfortable with.²

¹ National Summer Learning Association (2008)

² Questions are adapted from the National Summer Learning Association's and UWR's Afterschool Leadership Circle's Site Visit Checklist



LOGISTICS & COSTS

- What is the deadline for submitting applications?
- What is the tuition and registration fee?
- Is the tuition all-inclusive?
- How and when is tuition paid?
- Are scholarships or financial aid available?
- What are the program hours and dates?
- Is sign up required for the whole session or can it be done on a weekly basis?
- Are meals and/or snacks provided by the program?
- Is there transportation provided?

HEALTH, SAFETY, & THE ENVIRONMENT

- What does the program do to ensure a safe and healthy environment?
- Have background checks been done on the staff?
- What is the program's philosophy on health and nutrition?
- How does the program accommodate children with special needs (e.g., learning or physical disabilities, allergies)?

RELATIONSHIPS

- How does the program promote positive interaction between staff and youth?
- What is ratio of staff to youth?
- How does the program involve families? What type of communication can families expect?
- What training do staff members of this program receive?

PROGRAMMING & ACTIVITIES

- How is a typical day/week organized? How will children spend their time?
- Will my child be able to get physical exercise; opportunities for cultural enrichment; and practice in reading, math, and other skills?
- Will my child have an opportunity to choose some of their activities?
- Are the activities age-appropriate for my child?
- Do activities extend into an afterschool program during the school year?

FAMILY

- Can my child's position in the program be held in subsequent years?
- If one of my children is accepted into the program, is it automatic that my other child(ren) get into the program?

Notes
