



Camps can be accessible to everyone!

“A disability is no reason to deny a child a chance to enjoy the friendships and learning experiences available at summer camps. Reasonable accommodations are not an option; they are a requirement under the law.”

—US Attorney’s Office, District of New Jersey

The ADA and Summer Camps: Three Things Parents Should Know

The rights of children in childcare settings—including summer camp programs—are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you are a parent or guardian of a child with disabilities, it is important to be aware of these rights as you choose a summer camp for a child. Here are three important steps for picking a camp and what you need to know.

1. Review the Nondiscrimination Policy

ADA regulations require a camp to have a nondiscrimination policy, and you can ask to review it. It should state clearly that the camp will not discriminate against any individual based on disability, and that the camp will make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to allow equal access to camp services, unless the modifications would fundamentally alter the camp’s nature.

2. Reach Out Early!

Contact the camp as early as you can to discuss appropriate reasonable accommodations or modifications for your child.

Camps must evaluate each child and their accommodation needs individually. To determine if a child with a disability can participate in programs or activities, a camp must not react to unfounded preconceptions or stereotypes about what children with disabilities can or cannot do, or how much assistance they may require. Instead, the camp must individually assess whether it can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally altering its program. A simple discussion with the parent or guardian may result in an effective reasonable accommodation that the camp can implement.

3. Medications

The ADA requires camps to modify a “No Medication” policy by having staff administer certain medications—such as insulin, glucagon, and Epi-Pens—to campers with disabilities. It would be an ADA violation if a camp routinely rejects children with disabilities because the camp does not allow staff to give medication.