

LEARN YOUR CAMP ABC'S – HOW & WHY TO BOOK SUMMER CAMP NOW!

5 Tips For Picking The Right Sleepaway Camp

(January 28, 2014 – Portland, Maine) – While we endure record-breaking, subzero temperatures and heavy snowfalls, summer camp fills our minds. Savvy parents across the country who seek incredible growth and experiential opportunities for their children should research and register their kids for summer camp now (if they haven't already!). Several sleepaway camps in the Maine Camp Experience community report that just a handful of spots remain for the 2014 season; and many others are 80 percent or more already full (citing fall as a popular time for registration). So, to secure a spot for your child next summer, NOW is the time to look and book!

Camps, especially the 30+ premier sleepaway camps in the <u>Maine Camp Experience</u> community, will provide kids with the opportunity to enjoy the daily sports and activities, special events and trips, time-honored traditions, and new friendships ... but the trick is finding the right camp fit for your kid.

Here are **5 camp planning tips** from Laurie the Maine Guide, who provides complimentary personalized assistance to families across the U.S. and around the world.

Tip 1: Learn Your Camp ABC's:

Knowing the answers to these ABC's will help you get started on sleepaway camp planning:

- All summer or part? Camps offer sessions that range from 2 to 3.5 to 7 or 8 weeks. Also, some camps offer shorter "get your feet wet" sessions in the first year.
- Boys only, girls only, brother/sister, or coed?
- Cost inquire about tuition, trips, canteen, and special activities. The more weeks your child attends camp, the less expensive each week becomes. (Plus, no more at-home entertaining and babysitting costs for your child.)

Note: Try to think long term, not just your child's first year; the goal is to envision them attending the same camp in subsequent years. Lifelong camp benefits accrue over time. True camp enthusiasts live #TEN4TWO.

Tip 2: What's the ROI?:

Talking about return on investment when it comes to your child and summer camp may seem strange but ... you should think about what you want your child to gain from his/her time (and your money) spent on camp. Beyond the fun (and there is a lot!!) explore which camps will help your child grow most. *Note:* Will the camp: help your kid set and achieve goals? Challenge them to learn new skills? Instill core values like respect, responsibility, cooperation, and teamwork? Provide the chance to participate in social action initiatives (an integral part of experiencing camp in Maine)?

Tip 3: Oh The Places They'll Go:

Click their heels together and most campers would say, "There's no place like <u>camp!</u>" Camp can and should be a transformative special place, different from home. It's where kids can relax, unwind, unplug, and connect with nature and peers. It's also the place kids expand their horizons to meet new friends from other areas. (Geographic diversity of campers is a great benefit of camps in Maine.) Campers return home refreshed, more confident, independent and mature.

Note: Parents and siblings also benefit from selecting a camp in an idyllic setting. They, too, enjoy the relaxed pace, smell of pine in the air, and memorable vacation experiences during Visiting Day weekends and pre/post camp trips. (Summer in Maine is like nowhere else.)

Tip 4: What's the Plan Stan?:

Diary of your campy kid should be full of activities s/he excels at and likes best – so seek camps accordingly. Also, think about new activities that may not be available at home but may be great to try if a camp offers. And, consider if you'd prefer a camp that follows a more structured activity schedule, offer campers more daily/weekly choices, or somewhere in between.

Note: It's important to match your child to the right camp. Don't assume a camp is right for your child just because a friend, neighbor or relative attends.

Tip 5: Get on the Horn:

Start researching camps online, and it's also important to talk to qualified experts and parents about experiences their kids have at camp. MCE, www.mainecampexperience.com, combines technology and human advice – providing the benefits of a comprehensive informational website with camp overviews, videos, and self-posted camper, parent and staff testimonials (http://www.mainecampexperience.com/ Camp-Reviews/Camp-Reviews/) – with the unique opportunity to speak directly with an expert – Laurie, the Maine Guide, for personalized guidance and recommendations. Her service is free, and she matches your child to the right camps to consider (laurie@mainecampexperience.com to begin the discussion). She also knows which camps have space in particular age groups and sessions. Parents then speak with select camp owner/directors about the camps and even plan home visits. You can also ask to speak with current camp families to get additional insights, including Maine Camp Enthusiasts.

Note: While many families are researching/registering for summer 2014 ... it's not too early to plan for 2015. It's great if you can see a camp in session this coming summer for enrollment in 2015, which can be done at Maine camps through private tours, and visits on rookie (trial camp) days or weekends.

Experiences and friendships made as kids in camp are benefits that last a lifetime. In fact, many of the 500,000 alum of Maine camps find themselves reconnecting at universities, in careers and in social situations as adults. Many wind up sending their children to Maine camps too. Maine offers the greatest number of the oldest, most established overnight camps in the country.

Maine Camp Experience is a community of more than 30 premier, accredited sleepaway camps dedicated to providing children with the highest quality summer camp experiences in the country for generations. Each summer approximately 20,000 kids and their families enjoy what these Maine camps offer – the perfect combination of natural beauty, strong traditions and values, and incredible activities

and instruction. www.mainecampexperience.com is the resource for all things camp and Maine, including a Maine Guide, who offers families personalized, assistance for camp selection and planning visits to Maine. The site also features real Maine Camp memories self-posted by campers, parents, alumni, and staff; and special offers. Summers and Camp Belong in Maine ... And So Do You! Mattp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9m04uZntmVY

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