

CHECKLIST FOR SAFER CAMP EXPERIENCES

Camp experiences are one of the exciting joys of childhood and can lead to many positive growth opportunities. They can also be an anxious time for you as you worry about how to protect your kids while they are away.

When making a choice about the camps your child will attend, it's important to know what to ask. It's equally important to prepare your children for what to expect when they are away. It might seem overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be.

Below are some ways to get started:

- Talk early & often about body safety, even before your kids are old enough to go to camp. This includes using proper names for body parts.
- Does the camp run background checks? If so, what do they look for? What about staff members not from the US? How are they vetted?
- Does your state require camps to be licensed? If not, what are their requirements & procedures for hiring staff?
- Is staff trained in child sexual abuse prevention & reporting training? What are their reporting policies?
- What are the policies around sleeping arrangements and cabins? Bathrooms & shower usage?
- Do they have a code of conduct that includes limiting opportunities for uninterrupted one-on-one situations with adults or other children? If they do not have one, cross the camp off your list.
- Visit the camp in advance & don't hesitate to ask lots of questions. After your visit, what does your gut say? Be prepared to follow that reaction.
- Talk to your kids about different scenarios to help them feel comfortable with facing the unforeseen. Playing the "What If" game can help.
- What check-in points can you put into the mix? Maybe a call or text before bedtime? Create a code word for kids to use if they feel uncomfortable & need to let you know.

