



Camps

Does your son have asthma or ADHD? There's a camp for that! Do you have a child who doesn't live with his siblings or has a different ethnic background than you? There's a camp for that too! Is your family Quaker? Yep, there's even a camp for you (however, you'll have to go to New England if you want to go to a Quaker camp).

Where to Start

With such a wide variety of summer camps, where do you start and how to find the one that's right for your child? Families agree on two things when it comes to finding a camp:

- You hear about most camps through your friends and your children's friends.
- It's a matter of luck—an email here or an ad in the paper there.

There are, however, also some great tools to help you find the right camp.

- **Wisconsin** is a great place to look for resources within Wisconsin. <http://wisconsin.com/attractions/camps/index.html>
- The **YMCA** has an extensive network of overnight camps and day camps. Their national site has a data-

base that allows you to find camps within several miles of a zip code you enter.

<http://www.ymca.net/>

- Can't find that Quaker camp in Wisconsin? Try going to **KidsCamp.com** for resources in all 50 states. It even offers some overseas resources, as well. <http://www.kidscamps.com>
- Another national database is the **American Camp Accreditation**, which is the agency that has up to 300 standards by which they certify a camp. <http://find.acacamps.org>

Who Else Can You Contact?

Call us at **ARW** at (800) 762-8063. While we do not endorse any particular camp or service, our job is to help you find the resources you need to be a successful family. We often hear about successful camp experiences that we're happy to pass along.

Similarly, staff from Wisconsin's five **Post-Adoption Resource Centers** (PARCs) are also happy to help you. <http://wiadopt.net/site/indexer/382/content.htm>

Your local county **human services department** often knows about camps in its areas or unique opportunities like the Youth POWER Academy of



Photo Courtesy of Easter Seals

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Finance, where students meet for four hours for two weeks to gain important financial skills. (<http://assetbuilders.org/>) An independent living human services worker passed along this information to some foster and adoptive parents.

The “Wisconsin Idea” is a philosophy from 1904 that holds that the many benefits of the UW System should apply to *all* citizens of Wisconsin. Thus, Wisconsin offers enrichment opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. The **Precollege Programs** offer a wide range of programs for school-age kids. See the directory at: <http://apps22.uwex.edu/pls/uwhelp/Precollege>

The UW System also has many camps that offer academics, arts, and sports. You may have to search each particular campus to find a camp that meets your needs.

<http://wisconsin.edu/campuses/#campuswebsites>

Some Camp Recommendations

While there are far too many camps to list individually, the following are some that families and workers have recommended.

Badger Camp, Prairie du Chien.

Serves people with developmental disabilities by providing outdoor recreational experiences.

<http://www.badgercamp.org>

Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville.

One of the missions of Horizons is to provide nature experiences to city kids and others who might not get an opportunity to spend time outdoors. Offers many scholarships.

<http://www.horizons.bethel-madison.org>

Camp Manitowish YMCA, Boulder Junction.

Mission: For participants to grow in four aspects of their lives: wisdom, stature, favor with God and favor with one another. Offers many scholarships.

<https://www.manito-wish.org>

ComedySportz Milwaukee (day camp).

Kids learn how to play improv games, become more confident and learn to be a member of a team. Kids will learn great games applicable to situations in school, on the playground, and in every day life.

comedysportzmilwaukee.com/kids_camp.html

Easter Seals, Wisconsin Dells. For 70 years,

Easter Seals has been providing memories that last a lifetime for children and adults with cognitive and/or physical disabilities. Also includes camps for people with asthma and aspergers, and new this year, a day camp for kids ages 6-13 to help them understand people with disabilities.

<http://camp.eastersealswisconsin.com>

UMOJA: A Black Heritage Experience, Green Lake.

UMOJA is a Black Heritage Experience created for families who have adopted or are fostering African American children or children from the African continent and the diasporas. It provides an opportunity for children ages 3 to 18 and their families to celebrate the rich traditions of Black identities and culture in the United States.

<http://www.focol.org/umoja/index.html>

Benefits of Camps

In addition to the opportunities for kids to learn new skills, make new friends and have a break from their families, camps also have the potential to effect a child for a lifetime.

“I didn't always have the happiest of childhoods, but going to summer camp was always a highlight for me,” says Dustin Bronsdon, who was adopted from the foster care system as a teenager.

“When I was 15, I became a camp counselor myself, and this will be my 10th summer as a counselor. I'm happy to be able to give something back to the campers I work with, and equally important, they're able to give back to me a piece of my missing childhood.”

ARW