



## **Common Questions Asked By Parents**

### **1. Parents are a little nervous about having a child go to camp when they don't know anyone else that is there. Why aren't parents allowed to come or at least drop by during the week?**

All of us at CHAMP Camp wholeheartedly understand a parent's dilemma, and we want to be both sensitive and respectful to you. Quite frankly, parents are not included in our camp program because CHAMP Camp is specifically designed to allow a child to feel independence and freedom from family, which is an important part of growing up. Camp is where children can begin to learn about responsibility to themselves and others, trust, self-esteem, problem-solving, and decision-making, all among a group that is planned and monitored with many safety "nets" in place, but many of which are not always obvious. If parents are involved in our camp program, it honestly defeats our specific purpose. Campers do not readily reach out to others, or accept others, if they feel they can stay too "close" to the security of home. Some campers choose to bring a "counselor" from home to alleviate some of the anxiety of a new situation. This clearly has its advantages, as well as its disadvantages to the camper and family. Please read the enclosed flyer about campers and counselors coming to camp together to help you decide what is best for your child and family.

### **2. Why doesn't camp start on a weekend and end on a weekend so parents don't need to take vacation time from work to transport their child?**

We hope that you will be able to arrange your schedule to transport your child to and from camp. Unfortunately, what is convenient or easy for one family may not be for another. CHAMP Camp contracts with Recreation Unlimited to utilize the premises from Saturday through Friday. Saturday and Sunday (two full days) must be reserved for orientation for counselors. This is their time to learn a great deal about camp philosophy, policies and procedures, programming, and the needs of the campers. We also must get equipment set-up and supplies organized. Campers will leave camp on Friday morning so that counselors are able to re-group, pack equipment, evaluate the group experience, and get their personal items together before their own journey home on Friday afternoon. The vast majority of counselors take a week of their own vacations to provide this outstanding opportunity for your child.

### **3. What about the lack of air conditioning in the cabins in the summer heat?**

One this is for sure, we will never control the weather! But we are prepared for everything – heat, cold, rain, even tornado warnings. At Recreation Unlimited, cabins have a rustic feel, but are very modern with many conveniences. They are well-insulated, and ceiling fans keep the cabins cool and comfortable. We have 24 hour access to the camp health care center which has central air. We also drink plenty of fluids and utilize the big shade trees as necessary. We also arrange our activities as to not be out in the bright, hot sun in the middle of the afternoon.

#### **4. How do you handle homesickness, and why are campers discouraged from calling home?**

Becoming homesick is a natural phenomenon for many kids, and dealing with “separation” is actually an important milestone in normal growth and development. The counselors at camp are very skilled at helping children express their feelings and worries.

Logistically, if campers were calling home or being summoned to the telephone regularly to take a call from parents, we’d be interrupting programs all the time... and campers would be missing some real pleasures of camp! Apart from that, we believe coming to camp fosters independence, which is a significant step in growing up. (Heard that before?) We have found that children are better able to focus on the camp adventure and new friends when they are not constantly reflecting on home and family routines. Through phone conversations, children often sense parental anxiety and protectiveness, which may discourage campers from relying on the support of others among the camp community. Instead, they want to go home. Other children actually feel guilty for “leaving home” and having such a good time. When campers are able to successfully experience a week away from home, they have reached the goal of “doing something on my own”, and this achievement is a huge boost to self-esteem.

We do, absolutely, urge parents to call the Camp Directors as often as they like to check on their child. We generally are able to return phone calls after breakfast, after lunch and after lights out for the campers. We will be happy to give you an honest update of your child’s activities and health. We also will call you if we have any questions or concerns. We DO ask parents to write letters and mail care packages so that campers maintain connections with home, and they know they are loved and missed and also that their family is proud of their accomplishments.

#### **5. Why is camp held where it is?**

After quite an extensive search in several Midwestern states, Dave and Nancy felt extremely lucky to find a facility like Recreation Unlimited for the week of CHAMP Camp. Not only is the property accessible to adaptive equipment, but it is well-maintained, comfortable, and safe for our campers. Programmatically, it offers a wide range of activities to peak interest and create curiosity and wonder. The meals are varied, nutritious, and plentiful. (You may hear complaints, though. This is, after all, “camp”, and not Mom’s specialties.) Lastly, Recreation Unlimited allows us to establish our own medical protocol and bring in our own highly qualified staff as counselors. This is very important to us, and to you, too, we’re sure. Recreation Unlimited also offers us an affordable experience.

We realize that Columbus, Ohio is not “just around the corner” for many of you... and indeed many families drive many hours (or several days!) to come to camp. It is our intention to make the drive well worth it for the camper; we hope, as parents, you feel the benefits of the camp experience far exceed the inconvenience of travel.

**6. What if my child gets sick at camp? Is it true there are some non-professionals who provide medical care for the campers?**

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, your child will be transported by ambulance to Columbus Children’s Hospital with CHAMP Camp medical staff. The Pulmonary Department and Emergency Room are aware in advance of all campers and their diagnoses. If your child has to be transported to the hospital, you will be notified immediately.

Any camper who develops an acute respiratory infection or other illness, which necessitates a scope of treatment greater than camp can safely treat to allow continued participation in camp activities, will be sent home. Dr. Charles Dietzen will be at CHAMP Camp 24 hours a day for the duration of camp. More than half of our staff are pediatric registered nurses, licensed nurses and respiratory therapists. We also have physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, child life specialists, teachers, social workers, and others who are essential to our team, but are not responsible for medical care that is out of their realm of experience. We do have a few college students who are studying to be a health care professional, and their interventions are carefully supervised by a credentialed clinician. All medical procedures are done by qualified and licensed nurses and respiratory therapists only.

It is not unusual for a camper to return home with a mild respiratory infection, bug bites, or a twinge of sunburn. In spite of the daily medical care,, the busy activity schedule as well being exposed to the outdoor environment all week – sunshine, raindrops, wind, dust, changing temperatures – increase a camper’s vulnerability to an allergy or infection. We do want you to know that we do everything possible to ensure your child’s safety,, health, and equipment. Prior to camp, parents might want to check with the camper’s physician to see if prophylactic medications might be appropriate for the duration of camp.

**7. Are there other parents that can give me their perspective on CHAMP Camp?**

Absolutely! We are happy to provide you with “references” at your request. Different families have had varying experiences at CHAMP Camp, and we’d like you to know camp from different perspectives.

**8. What are CHAMP Camp’s criteria for accepting campers?**

A Medical Committee carefully screens the applications. We give first preference to returning campers, but we will have openings for new campers as well. The Medical Committee will consider mental stability, physical / respiratory needs, developmental age, male/female ratio, and the ability to be challenged and respond favorably to the camp environment. Please see the enclosed page entitled “CHAMP Camp Camper Admission Criteria” for more details.

**A Parent Handbook addressing other details of camp will be sent to families prior to camp.**