

IS YOUR DAUGHTER READY FOR CAMP?

Are YOU, as a parent, ready to send your daughter to camp? We are ready!

Q: How do I determine when is the right time to send my daughter to camp for the first time?

The biggest question to ask is, are YOU ready as a parent to let your child go? It helps to be clear on why you are sending her to camp. Whether it is to make new friends, learn new skills or gain independence, it starts with your goals for a positive camp experience. If you are upbeat about the upcoming experience, your child will reflect this same attitude. If your daughter has been able to successfully spend the night at grandma's or a friend's house, she is most likely ready for an overnight camp experience.

We are ready for your daughter. Our goal is for each girl to have a successful social learning experience while at camp. Through great activities and community living, we create an environment that teaches resilience and self-reliance. Camp professionals have been helping kids build independence for years. When choosing a first camp experience, start with the confidence that you have laid the foundation for your child's success. Begin the process with your child with words of encouragement and enthusiasm.

Q: How will I know my child is being supervised appropriately on and off site?

We are ready for your daughter. Our goal is for each girl to have a positive individual and group experience at camp. Camp staff are trained to focus on each camper every day from their heads to their toes. Supervision not only includes making sure girls are wearing life jackets but also that they are changing their clothes every day, drinking water and applying sunscreen and that healthy relationships are growing in their cabin or tent. Girl Scouts place a high priority on safety and train staff in all aspects of camp life – from leading activities to driving vans to cooking over a campfire. If leaving the camp, the field trip staff have visited the site and made travel and site emergency plans. Our goal is to carefully prepare and plan for each camp experience with your daughter in mind.

Q: How do you screen and select camp staff?

We are ready for your daughter. Our goal is to hire child-centered staff who enjoy the outdoor experience. Camp counselors include home grown Girl Scouts who have many years of experience in Girl Scouting as well as students from local universities who desire to be a part of the Girl Scout organization. After references are verified, all counselors are required to have an interview with the camp director. All staff must pass a criminal background check before they live and work with campers. The most important trait we are looking for in our camp staff is the desire to create a lasting camp experience for your daughter. Their job is to create an environment that will make your child fall in love with the camp experience.

Q: How will I communicate with my child while she is at camp?

We are ready for your daughter. Our goal is for each girl to build autonomy while at camp. We ask that all cell phones remain at home. In general, we work to promote independence and

group cohesion in campers by discouraging telephone contact during camp session, but there are exceptions to this philosophy. The Camp Director will contact the parent/guardian if a camper is having trouble adjusting to camp life after 24 hours onsite or if there are health concerns. Parents may "visit" their camper daily by viewing photos (at no charge) on the camp's Bunk1 web site. For a small fee, family members may send emails to the camper while at camp. Campers also love "real" letters and care packages during their stay. As a parent, this is the time to ask yourself again if YOU are ready for your camper to attend camp and have limited communication with them during their stay.

Q: What if my daughter does not have a friend to attend camp with her?

We are ready for your daughter. Our goal is for each girl to discover more about herself while connecting with other campers and camp staff. Many first-time campers and camper parents focus on the activities offered at camp and make the decision to attend camp based on canoeing, horseback riding, field trips, etc. While activities are important aspects of camp, that's not what camp is about. Camp is about making some of the best friends of your life. Campers not only make some of their best friends at camp, they learn what real friendship is. Camp is a social experience – learning to live, work and play together over the course of two-twelve days. Whether your daughter arrives at camp alone or with a friend, she will leave camp with new friends and experiences. Over the past five years, 99% of our campers shared they made a new friend at camp on their evaluations.

Q: What if my daughter has physical, psychological, emotional or medical needs that require daily support?

We are ready to partner with you, the parent. Our goal is to prepare each camper for success. In order to lay the foundation for success, parents and camp directors must partner by sharing information. Some parents hesitate to provide camps with personal information about their camper's health history. While Girl Scout camp can accommodate 95% of all girls, the other 5% require a different environment with staff trained to meet their needs. With this in mind, if your child's needs cannot be met at a Girl Scout camp, we would like the decision to be made with you before the registration process begins. If Girl Scout camp is not the environment for success, we will assist you in the search for a camp setting that is setup to provide a successful experience for your daughter.

Camper Essential Functions

In order to attend Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta summer day and resident camps, campers must meet the following essential functions.

- Move independently from place to place
- Effectively interact in a group based on program content
- Be able to meet personal needs (bathing, toileting, dressing, diet management, etc.)
- Capable self-manager of chronic illnesses

Please contact Jill Allison, Outdoor Program Manager, with questions, (770) 702-9151 or jallison@gsgatl.org.