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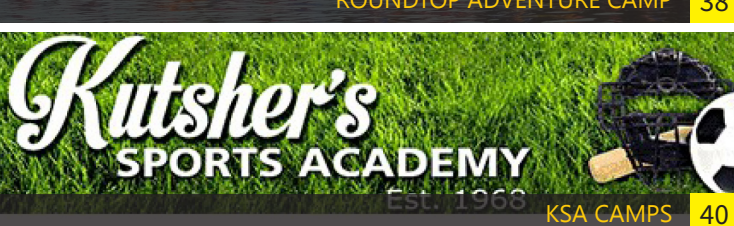
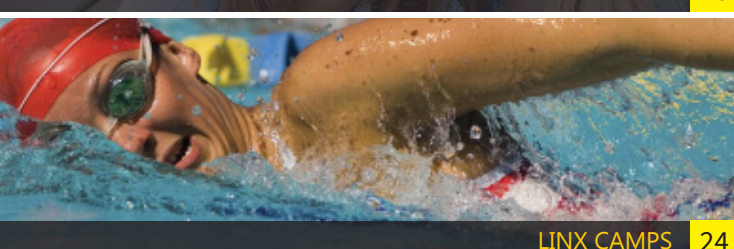
**FINDING THE ULTIMATE SUMMER  
CAMP FOR YOUR CHILD**



**CAMP SEWATARO**



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## A guide to choosing the ultimate Residential Camp for your daughter

Residential girls summer camps are much more than making friendship bracelets, toasting marshmallows for the perfect s'mores or learning camp cheers. It's about building independence, navigating through a parent-free environment, and trading in electronics for conversation. It involves community building and becoming an active member of a new sisterhood. Finding the best summer camp experience for your daughter can be a challenge. After all, you are not just selecting a camp for one summer but a summer home that will be a part of their lives forever.

As co-assistant directors of an all girls overnight camp in Northeast Pennsylvania, we have grown accustomed to partnering with parents in helping them find the perfect fit for their child. Here are the very basics of items to consider when making this important decision:

You researched the camp locations, prices, and schedules, and now it becomes important to dive into the philosophy of the camp and see if they are compatible with your family's core values. Camp philosophy translates to day-to-day life and speaks to

the childcare, the individuals who will be working and living with your children and the directors who will be ensuring their success all summer long. Many camps have mission statements to give you a clear idea of what they practice and teach. This will give you not only the "what" but the "how." What are the camp values and how will this camp teach your child friendship building skills, leadership, self-confidence, and independence. The camp philosophy should reflect upon the directors and show how they lead and support the camp.

Health, wellness and safety are the most important factors when considering a camp for your daughter. Begin your search for camps by making sure that the health and wellness staff are well trained and in constant communication with camp families. When touring camps, stop by the Health Center and speak with the staff to ensure that they are well-trained, knowledgeable and able to provide the best possible care. The hope of course as parents is that your child never visits the health center – but if they do, the peace of mind that they are in great care cannot be undervalued.



Once deciding that you would like to consider resident camps you can dig deeper into the overnight camp program and scheduling. First, consider session lengths (ranging from 2-7 weeks). Then take a look at basic make-up of the program; from electives and options to a more structured program there is truly a camp for everyone! It is imperative to choose a camp that has a program that fits well with your child's interests and personality and one that will continue to grow with your child.

Building a relationship with the director is an essential component when selecting a residential camp. How can this be accomplished? We suggest visiting the camp during the summer or scheduling a home visit. It's important to create a partnership in parenting with the director and the leadership team.

In addition to numerous conversations throughout the winter with the director, the camp should provide new families with support and confidence so they will understand your child's personality traits to better care for her over the summer. This relationship building prior to the summer will also be essential for bunk placement and general information to make your

daughter feel the most comfortable in her new summer home.

This article should serve as a jump -start for you as caring parents to find the most appropriate program for your daughter. The camp's philosophy should be one that includes a sense of wholesomeness, inclusiveness, and one that provides a nurturing and caring environment. Health, safety, and wellness needs to be of upmost importance to the camp as they take care of not just your daughter's physical needs, but her emotional and psychological health as well. Programming, scheduling, and duration of camp needs to be considered for your daughter based on her general interests. Does she want to star in the camp play and focus her attention at a drama camp, or find a more versatile program that includes not just drama, but sports, arts, and fitness?

Finally, the prospective parent should feel engaged and part of the camp community as they build a comfortable relationship with the director(s) as you inquire about the camp. These tips will serve you with reminders of what to look for in regards to the best quality program for your daughter as they begin this new unforgettable journey in their lives.

**Article by Lizzy Lean & Nicki Alpern**





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