Our Commitment to Excellence — and what that means to you and your child

As camp professionals, we understand that your biggest concern is for the safety of your child.  We also know you have goals for your child’s development related to the powerful lessons the camp experience provides in community, character-building, skill development, and healthy living.  We share those same goals, which is why we have taken the added step of becoming an Accredited Camp through the American Camp Association (ACA).

Who Is ACA?

The American Camp Association is a community of camp professionals, who, for more than 100 years, have joined together to share knowledge and experience to ensure high quality camp programs for children, youth and adults.  ACA works to preserve, promote, and improve the camp experience.  Our association is dedicated to helping our members and all camps provide:

* Camp communities committed to a safe, nurturing environment
* Caring, competent adult role models
* Healthy, developmentally appropriate experiences
* Service to the community and the natural world
* Opportunities for leadership and personal growth
* Discovery, experiential education, and learning opportunities
* Excellence and continuous quality improvement

Why Is ACA Accreditation Important?

As the only recognized accrediting body for the camp experience in the United States, ACA accredits approximately 2,400+ diverse camps nationally.  However, that number represents only 25% of the camps that operate in this country.  ACA’s goal is to continue to grow the number of accredited camps to ensure a safe and positive camp experience for more children.  ACA-Accredited® Camps meet up to 300 health and safety standards. Accreditation is a family’s best evidence that their camp is committed to the health, safety, and overall well-being of their child.

Other camps like to say they follow industry standards and best practices. Some even say they use the ACA guidelines, but the fact remains that camps that do not hold themselves up to a transparent, complete peer review of their operations are not acting in the best interests of their staff, campers, families, and the public at large. If your camp is not accredited, ask the owner or director why. Accreditation matters.

What Are the Standards of Accreditation?

The ACA standards of accreditation focus on health, safety, and risk management, as are widely used as operational benchmarks for the camp industry by local, state, and federal government entities, insurance companies, and courts of law.  Our camp and program successfully completed the peer-review process, which includes a visit by an ACA-trained team of standards volunteers, signifying that we meet the standards applicable to our program.  ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to ensure that current practices at our camp reflect the highest and most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation.

We Set Our Standards High

Earning and maintaining ACA accreditation takes time and commitment.  We set our standards high, in an effort to provide your child with an environment where he or she is having fun and is unaware of all of the work related to safety and learning, which has been carefully incorporated into the daily routine.

To be accredited by ACA, we had to demonstrate sound practices in every aspect of camp management and operation, including:

* Site: Fire protection, food service, sleeping quarters, utility and maintenance systems.
* Transportation: Procedures concerning drivers, vehicles, and traffic on site.
* Health and Wellness: Staff qualifications, facilities requirements, record keeping, storage and distribution of medicines, contact information, health forms.
* Operational Management: Safety regulations, emergency communication systems, procedures for intruders, personal property regulations.
* Human Resources: Staff qualifications, screening and training, supervision ratios, and procedures.
* Program Activities: Aquatics, adventure/challenge, trips, horseback riding, and staff qualifications for special programs.

Mandatory standards also include requirements for staff screening, emergency exits, first aid, aquatic-certified personnel, storage and use of flammables and firearms, emergency transportation, obtaining appropriate health information, among others.

Frequently Asked Questions about Camp Accreditation

*What are some of the ACA standards that camps rely on?*

* Staff-to-camper ratios that are appropriate for different age groups
* Goals for camp activities that are developmentally based
* Emergency transportation available at all times
* First-aid facilities and trained staff available when campers are present

*Does ACA accreditation require criminal background checks?*

ACA accreditation standards require a staff screening system, which may include criminal background checks where permitted by law. When talking to a camp director as you consider enrolling your child, ask what the screening process for that camp includes.

What the ACA Accreditation Standards Mean to You and Your Child

ACA Accreditation serves as an assurance to families that our camp cares enough to submit to a transparent, thorough review of our entire operation.  Our goal is to provide parents with as much information about our camp, to reassure your choice in a camp.  Our voluntary participation in the professional development and accreditation process of the American Camp Association demonstrates our commitment to providing you and your child with the best possible camp experience.

For more information about ACA Accreditation, contact our camp director or visit the American Camp Association website at [www.ACACamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org/).