



# THE SEARCH FOR SUMMER

AN INTERFAITH FAMILY'S GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT  
JEWISH SUMMER CAMP FOR YOUR CHILD (AND YOUR FAMILY)

# WHY JEWISH CAMP?

Camp is about so much more than campfires and color war. It's a chance for kids to explore who they are and who they want to become. At Jewish camp, *ruach*—spirit—is part of every activity. From dancing, sailing to hitting a home run—camp gives campers an opportunity to explore their connection to Jewish culture while improving their skills and most importantly, having the summer of their lives. Campers are bunkmates and team players, artists and athletes, creative problem-solvers and blossoming leaders, developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills – like independence, confidence, and creativity - they will use their entire lives. And the best part? With 155+ overnight camps and summer experiences to choose from, there is a perfect one for your child. Foundation for Jewish Camp works to ensure that there are diverse and welcoming experiences for all children. We are here to help you find yours!

## JEWISH CAMP IS MORE THAN JUST CAMP.

For your child, Jewish camp is just plain fun. But we know it's much more than that—it's camp with a soul.

- **Camp is exciting!** Your kids will have the summer of their lives while exploring independence, friendship, community, diversity, giving back, inclusion, integrity, and collaboration.
- **Jewish camp is packed with action:** boating, basketball, biking, ceramics, filmmaking, rock climbing, cooking, archery, ziplining, softball, horseback riding, painting, drama, dance—you name it!
- **Camp promotes your child's individual growth** in an enriching Jewish environment. At camp, kids have cool, Jewish role models that inspire confidence and independence, guiding your child to think creatively, build self-esteem, communicate more effectively, and discover interests and talents.
- **Campers become leaders.** Camp activities emphasize independence, communication, problem solving, collaboration, and leadership – skills that have become necessary in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world.
- **There's a Jewish camp for everyone**—no matter what your background is, there's a Jewish camp where your child will have fun, be comfortable, learn about themselves, and explore their identity.
- **Every camp does “Jewish” differently** – in this guide, we'll help you ask the right questions.

With over 155 camps to choose from, our *Find a Camp* tool makes it easy to discover camps you and your kids will love, based on information such as where you live, your child's grade, and the type of activities your child is looking for. Visit [OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp](https://OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp) to get started.

*Need help narrowing down your options? Read on for a guided camp search and suggested camps.*

# WHERE TO BEGIN?

Take a few minutes and think about the type of environment in which your child thrives. What kind of program will benefit them the most? What kind of experience are you and your child expecting from the summer? The right camp for your child becomes an extension of your home and your family's values.

## START WITH YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS.

Finding the right camp is often about finding a community your child -and your family- can be part of for summers to come. There are no right or wrong answers. Here are some questions to help in your family's camp search.

- Do I want a traditional camp that gives my child a wide variety of experiences, or do I want to select a specialty camp that focuses on a particular activity or set of skills?
- Does my child need lots of instruction and structure? Or would they prefer to have more choices?
- Does my child have any special dietary or physical needs that the camp will need to accommodate?
- What size camp will make my child feel comfortable?
- Do I want the camp to be affiliated with a particular movement or organization?
- What session length will appeal to my child and to our family plans for the summer?
- What type of location are we looking for? Consider options like mountains and lakefront, but also distance from home.
- What is my budget for camp tuition?
- How does Jewish at camp sync with Judaism in our home?

Once you have thought a bit about what you are looking for, talk to your One Happy Camper representative or visit [OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp](https://OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp) to find a camp you are interested in.

### About tuition.

First-time campers may be eligible for a One Happy Camper grant of up to \$1000. Visit [OneHappyCamper.org](https://OneHappyCamper.org) to learn more.

Many camps offer early registration incentives or sibling discounts. Scholarships may be available from your camp, synagogue, or other Jewish organizations. Visit [JewishCamp.org/camper-scholarships](https://JewishCamp.org/camper-scholarships) and contact your local synagogue or federation for additional information.

# GET DOWN TO DETAILS.

Every camp is different. From philosophy to facilities to food, there are as many unique approaches as there are camps. Asking questions, talking to staff, and getting familiar with what several different camps have to offer is the best way to narrow down which one is right for your child.

## EXPLORE SEVERAL CAMPS.

The best way to get started is to visit each camp's website, where you can find photos, maps or virtual tours of the camp facilities, and sample daily schedules. Websites will also inform you of key information about the directors and senior staff members, important dates, and registration information. From there, we suggest speaking to the director, schedule a visit with a camp staffer when they are in your area, set up a time to meet the parent of a current camper, or visit the camp if that is an option.

Each family's search is different, so focus on what is relevant and important to you. You can discover more Jewish camp options at [OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp](https://OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp).

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

### About the Camp

- What are the camp's values and philosophies? What makes the camp special?
- Is the camp co-ed? What is the interaction like between different ages and different genders?
- What is the size of the camp? How are the campers grouped? How many kids are in each bunk?
- What percent of campers return each year?
- What is the total cost of the camp? Are there specialty programs or trips that cost extra?
- How does the camp ensure campers' safety and security?
- How are behavioral and disciplinary problems handled?
- What is the camp's technology policy?
- Does the camp offer transportation to and/or from camp?
- What is the camper to staff ratio?
- Tell me about your campers. Are there other families that look like mine?

### Judaism

- Is the camp affiliated with any movement?
- How does camp celebrate Shabbat? What if my child doesn't know the words or songs – how will you make them feel comfortable?
- What other Jewish experiences are incorporated into the camp program?
- How are Jewish values woven into your program?

### Facilities and Programming

- What facilities are there, such as a lake or pool?
- What are the sleeping arrangements?
- What is the schedule like? Is the program structured or does it emphasize elective and individual choices? In what areas does the camp focus on skill-building?
- What instructional or specialty programs are offered?
- How does the camp program meet individual needs and differences?

### Food and Medical

- Can food allergies or other dietary needs be accommodated? What if my child has a very limited diet?
- Is the kitchen kosher?
- How does the camp handle individual medical needs? What medical facilities are nearby?

### Communication with Parents

- What contact will I be able to have with my camper while they are at camp?
- Will I be able to speak to a staff member while my child is at camp?
- What information (newsletters, emails, photos, calls) do you share with parents during the summer?

# WHAT IS ONE HAPPY CAMPER?

One Happy Camper provides grants of up to \$1000 to families with children attending nonprofit Jewish overnight camp for the first time.

## ABOUT ONE HAPPY CAMPER

One Happy Camper is a program of the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC), in partnership with local Jewish federations and other organizations, providing support to families like yours.

### How do I apply for a One Happy Camper grant?

1. **Register your child.** Once you've found the right camp for your child, register directly with the camp.
2. **Apply online for a One Happy Camper grant.** Once your child's registration at camp has been confirmed, visit [OneHappyCamper.org](https://OneHappyCamper.org) and complete our simple online application form.
3. **Check back in two to four weeks.** Your local One Happy Camper administrator will contact you once your application has been approved, or you can check your status online by logging in and selecting "Track My Grant." Once your application has been approved, funds will be paid directly to the camp and will be credited towards your balance. Funds are paid to the camp each spring.

### Is my child eligible?

To be eligible for a One Happy Camper grant, typically your child must be:

- Registered for an overnight camp listed on the Foundation for Jewish Camp's website.
- Attending an approved overnight camp for the first time for at least 12 consecutive days.
- Not currently participating in a daily immersive Jewish experience, such as a Jewish day school or immersion program. (Check with your local One Happy Camper administrator to learn about additional opportunities in your community.)
- Additional requirements and opportunities may be in place in some areas.

If you have questions about eligibility or regarding your application, please follow up with your local One Happy Camper administrator. To find administrator listings by state, visit [OneHappyCamper.org](https://OneHappyCamper.org).