



# ERTHEO

Est. 2001

## How to choose a summer camp

- Guide for parents -



**HELPING YOUR CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**

Empowering abilities,  
**capacity**, and **potential**  
your **Children's**.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Choosing a summer camp for your child can be quite difficult. It's even more difficult if you are looking for a sleep away residential camp or a camp in a **foreign country**. There are many different factors you'll have to take into account and investigate to be able to send your children to the right camp. After all, it's important that they're both well taken care of and that they enjoy a fantastic experience.

With more than 17 years of experience offering summer camps all around the world, we have decided to create a guide for choosing the right summer camp. In this guide, we highlight the many factors that parents must take into account and investigate when choosing a camp for their children.

In the following chapters, you'll find **the different types of camps** that are available, what **questions to ask, what to investigate** about a camp, and, more generally, the **many differences between the camps**. In addition, you'll find **answers to parents' most frequently asked questions** about camps. Furthermore, at the end of the guide, we include information that parents might find useful after they have reserved the camp. We talk about **what to pack, camp rules, visits**, and even how to react as parents **if our children are homesick** during their first few days at camp.

In the next chapter, we discuss the contents of this guide in greater detail.



## 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

In this chapter, we summarize the rest of the contents of this guide and provide step by step instructions to choosing the perfect camp and sending your child on their way. This guide contains everything you'll need to know about sending your child to the perfect summer camp including how to begin your search, how to send your child on an airplane, and how to support them during their first few days at camp.

### PHASE 1: THE SEARCH AND RESERVING THE PERFECT CAMP

#### **STEP 1: DEFINE BOTH YOUR OBJECTIVES AND YOUR CHILD'S OBJECTIVES.**

To be sure that the camp you choose meets the objectives and expectations of parents and children alike, it's a good idea to sit down together and discuss the objectives you both have. Try to come to an agreement about your main objectives and write them down on a piece of paper. These objectives will play a vital role in the rest of your search for the perfect camp. See chapter 3 for a list of some common objectives to choose from.

#### **STEP 2: SELECT THE KIND OF CAMP YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR.**

There are day camps, sleep away residential camps, or mixed camps where some participants only attend during the day and others spend the night. In chapter 4, we discuss the three different kinds of camps and the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

#### **STEP 3: SELECT THE CAMP ACTIVITY.**

In chapter 5, we discuss the different kinds of activities that camps tend to offer: adventure, languages, sports, art, academic, etc.

#### **STEP 4: REVIEW IMPORTANT DETAILS OF CAMPS YOU'RE CONSIDERING.**

Once you've defined your objectives, chosen the type of camp that best suits your needs, and selected the main activity that most interests your children, it's time to investigate and compare your various options.

In chapter 6, we highlight the most important details you should investigate according to the type of camp you're researching and your personal objectives. We talk about how to investigate the quality of training, language classes, facilities, staff, entertainment activities, food, etc.

## STEP 5: COMPARE THE PRICES OF THE CAMPS.

In chapter 7, we teach you how to compare the prices of camps. We discuss which elements are considered the most costly and how to discover the true value of a camp. Additionally, we discuss hidden elements which could raise a camp's value and provide your child with additional benefits.

## STEP 6: DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO MAKE THE RESERVATION.

In chapter 8, we discuss your different options for booking a summer camp and the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

- Reserve directly with the camp
- Reserve through a camp portal
- Reserve with an agency like [Ertheo](#)

We also provide some tips for determining whether or not a camp or agency is trustworthy.

## STEP 7: RESOLVE ALL YOUR DOUBTS BEFORE MAKING A RESERVATION.

In chapter 9, we answer the most frequently asked questions that parents have asked us during our 17 years of experience advising parents about camps for their children.

## PHASE 2: PREPARING FOR THE CAMP

In chapter 10, we present the Camp Arrival Manual where we discuss everything you need to know to properly prepare for your child's stay at camp. We talk about what to pack, the transportation to the camp, transfer services, the kind of information you'll receive from the camp itself, etc.

## PHASE 3: ADAPTATION DURING THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF CAMP

Finally, in chapter 11, we discuss what to expect during the first few days of camp. We talk about what the children can expect during their first few days, and we explain how the children can communicate with their families during their time at camp. We also talk about how to react in the event that your child has some trouble adjusting to their time away from home.

All this information in chapter 11 is important to discuss with your child before they embark on their adventure. If they know what to expect, the transition process will be smoother and easier.

### 3. KEY POINTS BEFORE BEGINNING TO LOOK FOR A CAMP

Before you even begin to shop for a camp for your children, it's important that you **consider the main reasons for which you would like to send your child to a summer camp**. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Each family has their own reasons for sending their child to a camp. Whatever your reasons might be, it's good to clarify them before you begin your search.

By clarifying your objectives, you give yourself **a focal point when researching** camps. For example, if the main reason for sending your child abroad is to give them some extra practice using their second language skills, when you shop for a camp, you should focus your attention on the many aspects that might influence your child's language learning. Contrarily, if your main reason for sending your child to a camp is to give them extra football practice, you should be focusing on the aspects of the camp that could influence their football training.

Creating a focal point of research is especially important because, in terms of summer camps, **looks can be deceiving**. Camps don't always include the benefits that they appear to. For example, a camp that takes place abroad doesn't necessarily guarantee quality language classes. Likewise, a camp that is affiliated with a prestigious sports club doesn't necessarily ensure that participants receive quality training. By keeping your objective in mind, it's **easier to ask the right questions** when researching specific camps.

Furthermore, if you start to look for a camp right away without first establishing your reasons for sending your child to a summer camp, it's possible to lose focus and send your child to a camp that doesn't accomplish the objectives that you had originally planned. We speak from experience. Many parents who don't first reflect upon why they'd like to send their child to a summer camp get caught up in flashy advertising and send their child to a camp with objectives different from their own. Both the parents and the child end up disappointed with the results.

This is why we highly recommend that parents first **contact us to reflect and discuss** the main reasons for sending their child to a camp. Often, they call with a very clear idea of which camp they want to reserve. After speaking with our team, however, they realize that a different camp is better suited to their needs and objectives.

It's also important to discuss those objectives with your children before making a decision. Ideally, the **parents and the child should choose a camp together**. Although they won't always have the same objectives, many camps combine learning with sport or leisure, making it relatively easy to find a camp that meets the needs of both parents and children.

Moreover, reflecting upon objectives is **even more important when you're deciding whether or not to invest in more expensive camps** like camps abroad, in prestigious academies, or camps affiliated with world-famous sports clubs. These camps are a great investment if your main objective is for your children to practice sport and improve on the pitch or court. For parents and children seeking simple entertainment, these camps could be considered a waste of money.

Below, we have listed some of the main reasons why you might send your child to a summer camp to help you clarify your objectives before you begin your search:

– **Child care**

- To care for your children during their school vacation while you work

– **Education / academic training**

- To improve second language skills
- To prepare to enter the university
- To study specific academic subject
- To learn about leadership
- To learn about business and entrepreneurship



– **Sports training**

- To improve sport skills
- To explore the possibilities of attending a high performance academy in the long-term (high level sport)
- To recover from an injury
- To prepare for a trial / tryout

- **Creative / artistic development (music, dance, theater, painting, etc.)**
  - To improve creative / artistic ability
  - First contact with one of these disciplines
- **Personal growth**
  - To experience another country (without parents)
  - To get to know and interact with children from other cultures
  - To mature and learn self-confidence
- **Fun and entertainment**
  - To reward your child for doing well in school
  - To have a nice vacation free of study



In chapter 6, we provide more details about how our objectives influence (or should influence) the way we shop for a camp and what camp we eventually choose.

## 4. TYPES OF CAMPS

There are many kinds of camps. There's a camp for practically every sport or activity out there. That being said, we can begin by classifying camps into **two main categories: residential camps and day camps.**

At [Ertheo](#), we only offer residential camps because, first of all, they provide children with a more enriching and complete experience. Second of all, there are so many local day camps all over the world that we couldn't possibly get to know all the details of each camp to be able to properly advise parents about their best options.

Nevertheless, below **we explain the differences between day camps and residential camp** in greater detail and offer some advice regarding which option might be the better option for you and your specific needs.

TYPES OF CAMPS	
Residential camps	Day camps
<p>✓ <b>ADVANTAGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More complete experience</li> <li>• International participants</li> <li>• Complete language immersion</li> </ul>	<p>✓ <b>ADVANTAGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Low-cost</li> </ul>
<p>✗ <b>DISADVANTAGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher price</li> </ul>	<p>✗ <b>DISADVANTAGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seems more like extracurricular activities than a camp</li> </ul>

### 4.1 DAY CAMPS

Day camps are similar to extracurricular activities in that they tend to be **organized in education centers**, and they usually consist of similar kinds of activities. Day camps, however, tend to be a bit more complete, beginning in the morning and ending in the afternoon with lunch included.

They can be **quite inexpensive** and are designed to provide parents who work during the summer with **a safe place** where they can leave their children during the day. These camps are also designed to entertain children and keep them from getting bored during the day. This makes day camps **perfect for small children** who are not yet prepared to sleep away from home and for parents who are looking for something fun and productive for their children during school vacations.

On the downside, if you decide to send your child to a day camp, you'll have to **pick them up and drop them off** at a specific location every day from Monday to Friday which can be quite **inconvenient**. Additionally, most participants at day camps are local children that live close to the camp headquarters. This means that children at day camps are **not exposed to as much diversity** as children at sleep away residential camps. Finally, they offer a much less intense experience than residential camps. As mentioned earlier, day camps are **comparable to extracurricular activities** while residential camps are designed to really develop a child in specific areas (sports, languages, academics, personal growth, etc.).

If your main objective is for your child to have fun during the hours in which you work during the summer, a day camp is the right option for you. If your main objective is for your child to advance in some sport, language, or other theme, a day camp is not the best option. Rather, you should be exploring residential camps.

## 4.2 RESIDENTIAL CAMPS

Residential camps offer **complete programs that usually last for two weeks** (13 days from Sunday to Saturday). Accommodation, food, and training activities are all included in the price of a residential camp.

These camps usually **focus on one or more main activities** (sports, language learning, academic advancement, artistic or creative development, etc.); however, **fun and entertaining activities** are almost always included in the programs.

Since these programs consist of more hours and include accommodation, food, etc., they are often **more expensive than day camps**. Likewise, higher quality residential camps guarantee better educational and training programs and, therefore, require an even greater investment.

Besides higher quality training, residential camps offer **children the opportunity to grow and mature as individuals**. At these camps, children are required to step outside of their comfort zones and learn to **deal with uncertainty**. Most residential camps, for example, accept international students. Thus, children learn to **communicate in new languages** and, more importantly, they **learn tolerance**.

Furthermore, at residential camps, children gain independence. Contrarily to local camps where children attend with their friends from school, children attend residential camps without knowing anyone at the camp. At camp, they learn to **make new friends** and socialize with other children whom they don't know. If they want to make new friends, they need to figure out how. This boosts their **self-confidence** and their **independence**.

In conclusion, by stepping out of their comfort zones, children who attend residential camps grow and mature into brave, **self-confident, and responsible young adults**. By facing a new situation in which they must adapt to the camp, camp rules, make new friends, etc., without the help of their parents, children at residential camps learn to be brave and make decisions for themselves.

Although residential camps present many advantages, they are **not suitable for all children**. Many camps that we work with accept children as young as six years old. However, most six-year-olds aren't ready to be away from their parents for two weeks; children are usually ready to leave the house **between nine and twelve years old**. That being said, each case with each child is different. Some children are more accustomed to spending time out of their homes while others hardly leave their homes.

At the end of the guide, we discuss preparing our children to spend time away from home and preparing ourselves as parents to say goodbye to our children for two weeks as they embark on their adventures at residential camps. But first, let's take a look at camps that serve as both day camps and residential camps.

### 4.3 MIXED CAMPS

There are also **camps that function as both day camps and residential camps where participants can choose which option they prefer**.

At such camps, it's important to check the ratio of campers who participate in each program (whether day camp or residential). If most of the children take part in the residential program and your child only attends during the day, it's likely that they will feel a little excluded as they miss out on the nighttime activities.

**We recommend that if you're looking for a day camp, you choose a camp that functions exclusively as a day camp.** That way, your child won't feel like they're missing out on the rest of the activities when you pick them up in the afternoon.

## 5. MAIN ACTIVITIES – THE FOCUS OF THE CAMP

We've discussed the differences between residential camps and day camps. Now, let's take a look at the different activity options you're likely to find as you search for the best camp for your children.

There are camps for just about any skill or activity that your child might find interesting. At [Ertheo](#), we only offer the most popular residential camp options as we have the most experience with these camps.

In the following section, we go into detail about all the factors we must take into account when choosing a camp. **In this section, we speak briefly about different camp themes and main activities.**

### 5.1 ENTERTAINMENT – MULTIAVENTURA

As parents, when we think back to the **classic residential camps** that we attended as children, we remember that **fun and adventure was always their main purpose**. There might have been some other educational elements and sports might have played an important role in the camp, but the main objective was always to have a good time.



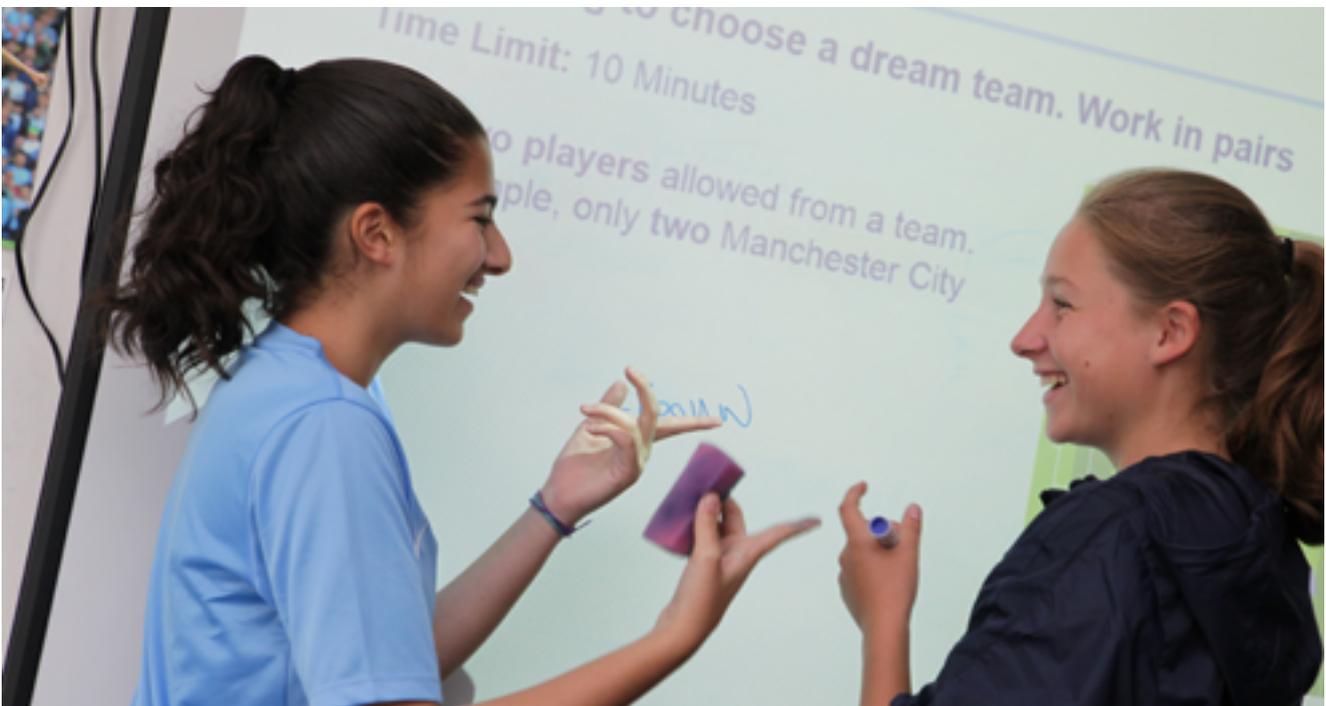
These camps focused primarily on fun and entertainment are becoming rare as parents are demanding that camps contain more educational elements. Parents invest a lot of money in sending their children to residential camps. It's understandable that they want additional education benefits for their children.

**To meet the demands of parents, many camps offer this same exciting, adventurous experience and pair it with language classes.** In doing so, children experience the same amount of academic advancement as they do fun, and both parents and children are happy. Nevertheless, in most camps that offer language classes, students learn in an interactive and fun way that's nothing like what they would experience in a traditional classroom.

All that being said, if you're looking for a camp dedicated exclusively to fun and entertainment, it's better to research local day camps in your area because most residential camps offer some kind of academic element.

## 5.2 LANGUAGES

**Language camps, which combine language learning with a sport, are the most popular camps among parents.**



These days, it's extremely important for our children to learn a second language, and most parents recognize this. That's why, over the last 10 years, there has been a boom in the number of camps dedicated to second language learning. There are camps available for learning practically any language.

Unfortunately, it's **not always easy to choose high quality programs.** Many camps take advantage of the great demand for language camps and offer low quality language programs for high prices. Additionally, when choosing language camps, looks can be deceiving. Sending your child abroad to learn a language may seem like a great idea, but that's not always the case. It's really important to research various aspects of language camps to make sure you get great value for your money.

To help with this problem, in chapter six, we go into much greater detail about how to choose a language camp. And, we talk about what to keep in mind when deciding between your options.

### 5.3 SPORTS

Sports themed camps are also becoming more popular, especially those which combine sports with language classes. These programs offer a unique experience for children, motivating them to learn languages or other skills while practicing the sport that they love.

The most popular sports camps include: football camps, tennis camps, basketball camps, and aquatic sports camps. Camps for other disciplines such as track and field, rugby, equestrianism, motor sports, etc. are also available, although these camps are more difficult to find.

Sports camps can also be categorized by who organizes them. Below, we offer a summary of the different kinds of sports camps according to their organizers and/or founders:



Sports camps can also be categorized by who organizes them. Below, we offer a summary of the different kinds of sports camps according to their organizers and/or founders:

- **Local teams:** In many cities, local teams offer sports camps both for their own players and to scout new players. Normally these camps are day camps.
  
- **Famous athletes and/or famous trainers:** Many camps are named after a well-known athlete, ex-athlete, coach, or ex-coach. In many cases, camps merely assume the name of these athletes for marketing purposes. That is, in most cases, the famous athlete or coach may visit the camp during the day and take photos with the participants, but they are not involved in the methodology or the philosophy of play implemented during the trainings.
  
- **Sports clubs:** Many sports camps or programs are organized by successful sports clubs. At [Ertheo](#), many of the camps we offer fall into this category. In these camps, some clubs are more involved with the camp than others. In some cases, the clubs work closely with camp organizers and even send them some of their new young coaches to train the camp participants. In other cases, the camp takes place in the club's facilities, and the club is entirely in charge of everything that takes place at the camp.
  
- **Sports brands:** Some camps are either named after or organized by well-known sports brands. Often a well-known athlete sponsored by the brand visits the camp, and the camp advertises this visit as a special feature of the camp. Quality of training at camps organized by sports brands varies greatly.
  
- **High performance academies:** These academies are open all year round and offer intense training programs for athletes who have the potential to play professionally. During the summer months, the academies host summer camps where training tends to be more intense than training at other camps. In fact, high performance academy camps are almost entirely dedicated to sport training leaving little time for entertaining activities or language classes.
  
- **Others:** In other cases, camp organizers not closely affiliated with the sports world contract coaches or collaborate with teams to be able to offer a sport as an extra activity in their camps.

## 5.4 ART AND CREATIVITY CAMPS

Many camps feature art and/or creativity programs. Some of the most common programs **feature dance, music, painting, or theater**. Other programs feature videogame design or film study programs.

On many occasions, these camps **take place in schools or education centers** which also offer year-long programs dedicated to teaching their students one or more of these skills. Then, during the summer, they offer camps for their own students or to **recruit new students**.

Other camps contract creative/artistic professionals to give classes and/or organize workshops for camp participants.



## 5.5 ACADMIC / INTELLECTUAL

**Academic studies or intellectual growth** is another common theme for summer camps. These camps are normally designed for adolescents from **15 to 18 years old**. **Leadership, debate and argumentation, business, and entrepreneurship** tend to be common themes of camps that fall into this academic category

We've discussed the different kinds of camps that are available and the activities that they offer. We've also discussed the importance of reflecting upon the specific reason why we would like to send our children to a summer camp. Keeping both points in mind, it's time to **make sure that the camp you choose both offers activities that interest your children and meets your own objectives.**

As we mentioned briefly earlier, it's easy to get distracted by pamphlets and brochures with bright colors and smiling faces which feature fun and interesting activities and attractions. Likewise, attractive prices might have you clicking make a reservation before you've really checked all the details.

We simply cannot stress enough the importance of researching specific facts and details of various camps you're interested in before investing a large sum of money on a camp for your child. And, of course, the specific facts and details you research depend on your objectives for your child.

In this chapter, we discuss **the most important features of sports camps, language camps, and other camps in detail.** Always research these specific features of any camps that you're interested in keeping in mind your principal objective. At the end of the day, if you ask the right questions and never stray from your goal, you'll find the perfect camp for both you and your children

### How to choose the best summer camp for your child

- **Ask your child what they like:**  
It's important that they enjoy themselves at camp.
- **Select a camp in which your child also learns:**  
You can choose a camp which includes language classes for example.
- **Investigate the camp's organizers:**  
Selecting a camp with qualified organizers is essential to the ultimate satisfaction of both parents and children.

## 6.1 SPORT CAMPS

### WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD I FOCUS ON IN ORDER TO CHOOSE THE CORRECT CAMP?

If one of your main reasons for sending your child to a camp is for them to improve their sports performance, be sure to ask the following questions:

- How many hours of training per week does the program include?
- Who are the trainers? (Pay attention to their titles, their experience, and the level they used to train at, etc.)
- Who is organizing the camp? (Sports club, high performance academy, camp Company, etc.)
- How are the training groups organized? (By age, by level, or both)
- What is the total number of participants, and what's their skill level?
- Do participants train in large, medium, or small groups, and do participants train with other players of the same level?
- How is the quality of the facilities in which the young athletes train?
- Does the camp employ new training technology?
- Does the program include theory sessions where the participants discuss tactics and strategy?
- Does the program include tournaments, friendly matches, etc.?

As you can see, there are many details to take into account. Some may be more important than others depending on the child's level and exactly what kind of camp you're looking for. Nevertheless, whether your child is a beginner or an expert, it's important to research the points above before deciding which camp to send them to.

To demonstrate how each of these factors plays a role in the overall quality of training, let's compare two hypothetical sports camps. Camp 1 may feature groups of 6 – 10 players per coach or trainer while Camp 2 may feature larger groups of 25 participants per trainer. The quality of training at Camp 1 would most likely be better than the quality of training at Camp 2. However, if 6 – 10 players train with a coach with hardly any qualifications, the smaller groups doesn't necessarily guarantee higher quality training. The same applies to camps with more or fewer hours of training per week; it's necessary to take all aspects of training into account.

It's also worth mentioning that all these factors affect the price of the camp. Higher quality training is likely to cost more than lower quality training. On the other hand, if the high quality training is accompanied by low quality accommodation, and the low quality training program features high quality accommodation, prices might just be the same. That's why it's important to clarify objectives and to research before choosing a camp.

## 6.2 LANGUAGE CAMPS

### WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD I FOCUS ON IN ORDER TO CHOOSE THE CORRECT CAMP?

If one of your main reasons for sending your child to a camp is for them to improve their second language skills, ask the following questions:

- Where is the camp located? (It's usually better to send your child to a camp located in a country that speaks the target language.)
- How many hours of class does the program include?
- Are the teachers native speakers?
- Do the teachers have experience teaching foreign students?
- Who organizes the camp? (A language school? A camp company?)
- What levels are there and how are the levels organized? (Is there a level test?)
- How many students are there per class?
- **The percentage of students which speak the student's native language**
- **In what language are camp activities carried out? Will students be practicing their second language while they participate in other camp activities? Or is their practice limited to the classroom?**

Like sports camps, language camps also contain many features which greatly influence the quality of the camp and how much our children would learn there. The same basic principles that apply to sports camps apply to language camps. That is, typically, the **more hours** of language classes the students receive the **more likely they are to learn**. Likewise, smaller classes with **fewer students per teacher** are more likely to be **more interactive** and **more effective**. Nevertheless, it's important to take all factors into account in order to choose correctly.

Additionally, it's wise to pay extra attention to the last two points written in bold lettering. In our 17 years of experience sending students abroad to study languages, we've learned that these two points are perhaps the most important in regards to how much the students truly learn.

First of all, if a high percentage of students at the camp speak the student's native language, they don't practice much. In fact, if just 15 – 20% of the camp participants speak the student's native language, the student will gravitate toward those students and spend almost 100% of

- Percentage of camp participants which speak your child's native language (should be less than 15%)
- The language in which camp activities and general camp communications are carried out (should be in your child's target language)

their time interacting in their native language. Contrarily, **when less than 15% of participants speak the student's native language, they feel more obligated to step outside their comfort zone and practice speaking** their target language in order to make friends.

Secondly, when all camp activities are carried out in the student's target language, they have the potential to learn a lot faster. Many language camps feature a highly international crowd where students are forced to use the target language to communicate. In this kind of environment, it's easier for students to communicate without the fear of making mistakes. The objective at these camps, especially during entertaining camp activities, is to understand and be understood rather than to achieve perfect fluency and accuracy often demanded in traditional classrooms. As a result, **students feel more comfortable and learn faster.**

In summary, to really learn a language, children must be exposed to the language as much as possible in every way. If you're sending your child to a camp to learn a second language, it's important to research just how much they'll be using the language. Research more than just the location and the qualifications of the professors. **Find out how many hours of classes they attend, how many students at the camp speak your child's native language, whether or not the activities are carried out in your child's target language, etc.**

## 6.3 OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS TO KEEP IN MIND

### WHAT OTHER GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD I FOCUS ON IN ORDER TO CHOOSE THE CORRECT CAMP?

For camps featuring other activities, we put together a list of general factors that you should consider before deciding where to send your children. Then, in the following sections we go into detail about how to analyze each of these points to ensure you choose the right camp for your child.

- Available dates, number of weeks, camp availability
- Specific pre-requisites for participants: age, skill level of main camp activity, level of English, etc.
- Camp facilities
- Type of accommodation and rooms: Residence, hotel, bungalows, individual dorms, double rooms, multiple participants per room, etc.
- Camp personnel
- Number of monitors per group
- Free time activities
- Required transport to and from accommodation, activities, and English classes.
- Food – What kind of food do they offer? Are the children allowed second helpings? Does the camp offer special menus (gluten free, vegetarian, etc.)
- Details about other camp participants: Ages, nationalities, boy to girl ratio, total number of participants
- Does the camp offer transfer, arrival, and departures services to and from the airport?
- PRICE

#### 6.3.1 Starting dates and duration of the camp

Looking for a camp with a specific starting date and a specific duration can greatly limit the number of camps available to you. Therefore, if this is your case, finding camps with the starting dates and durations you're looking for is a good place to start. Then, you can start to filter out your options using the rest of the criteria listed above.

**Most camps take place from the end of June to the end of July / beginning of August.**

Of course, some camps are available from the beginning of June until the end of August, but there are much fewer options with these starting dates.

Furthermore, **most camps feature two week programs**; very few offer programs of just one week. In most camps, it is possible to reserve more than two weeks. However, in many cases, you have to reserve the camps in two week blocks. That is, you have to reserve two, four, six, or eight weeks.

### 6.3.2 Age

At [Ertheo](#), we **offer camps to children from 6 to 21 years old**. The **majority of the camps are for children from 8 – 9 to 16 years old**. If your child doesn't fall in this age range, their possibilities can be quite limited. If such is your case, finding camps that accept participants your child's age would be a great place to begin your search for a camp.

Your child's age can also limit their options in terms of camp destinations. For example, if you're thinking about sending your child to a camp abroad, keep in mind that they may have to travel alone on the plane. **It's difficult to recommend a minimum age** for sending children abroad because their preparedness really **depends on their personal experience, maturity level, ability to handle adversity, etc.** We have had children as young as 9 to 10 years old attend camps abroad without problems.



### 6.3.3 Accommodation and facilities

From our experience, **parents consider facilities to be one of the most important features** of a camp. Facilities differ greatly from one camp to another; thus facilities can really help you decide between one camp and another.

Some camps take place in **luxurious and stylish complexes** similar to four or five star hotels. Others take place in **basic and modest cabins or bungalows** where children share bedrooms and bathrooms. Keep in mind that these differences can greatly affect the prices of the camps. As always, before choosing a camp for the quality of its accommodation, it's important to consider the wants and needs of your child.

Regarding facilities, it's also important to **find out if all of the facilities are located on the same premises**. In some camps, accommodation, training grounds, and/or accommodation are located in different areas. Participants at these camps must travel by bus every day to and from different camp activities. A camp with **all the facilities on the same premises is more comfortable** for the children.

In summary, it's important to research the quality of the camp's accommodation while keeping in mind both your child's unique needs and the price.



### 6.3.4 Free time activities

Even if you're planning to send your child to a camp with one or more main themes, like sports training or English classes, they'll more than likely have free time in the evenings. This means, it's important to **investigate what kinds of activities are offered for the participants during their free time.**

As is the case with accommodation and facilities, camps differ greatly in terms of the free time activities they offer. Some camps offer **complete activity programs and excursions** and have camp **staff which specializes in planning activities for the children** and keeping them entertained. Other camps offer some activities but seem to dedicate very little time and effort to entertaining the children.

Some camps, such as camps at high performance academies, offer little to no activities for the campers. Rather, these camps focus entirely on sports training. Nevertheless, after training for six to seven hours a day, most children prefer to rest rather than take part in activities.

As always, when researching free time activities, **it's important to take into account your child's specific needs.** If they're active and extroverted and don't tire easily, they'd enjoy a camp full of interactive activities. If, on the contrary, your child is less active, more introverted, and gets tired more easily, choose a camp with less interactive activities. A camp with less organized activities and more free time to enjoy facilities like a TV room or a videogame room might be better suited to such a child

### 6.3.5 Camp personnel

Investigating camp personnel is perhaps **one of the most difficult prerequisites** to choosing the right camp for your child. Nonetheless, it's probably **one of the most important.**

Camp personnel along with accommodation are the **most costly aspects of a camp.** And, as is the case with accommodation, camps differ greatly in the quality of their personnel.

In the sections below, we provide more information about the **different types of personnel** at a camp. We also discuss key points to keep in mind when researching the different kind of camp staff.

#### 6.3.5.1 Monitors

Monitors are **in charge of looking after the children** whenever they're not participating in an activity organized by a specific staff member such as a trainer or a teacher. They organize all free time activities and excursions. Out of all the staff members, monitors generally have **the most contact with campers.**

There's **great difference among the qualifications** of monitors that camps hire. Many camps hire **young people and students** as monitors while others hire **professionals in childhood education**. The ratio of monitors to children also varies greatly among different camps. The more monitors per child, the more attention each child will get.

The **qualifications of monitors** and the **monitor to child ratio** are both important factors to investigate when researching the camps' personnel.

### 6.3.5.2 Coaches/Trainers

Coaches or trainers are staff members who dedicate their time at the camp to leading the main camp sport or activity. As is the case with monitors, many camps simply **hire university students with personal experience in the sport** or activity to lead the trainings. Other camps **hire professional coaches to train the children**.



If one of your main objectives is for your child to learn as much as they can about their sport or favorite activity, it's a better idea to send them to a camp where professionals are in charge of the training sessions.

### 6.3.5.3 Teachers

If the camp offers language classes or an additional academic theme, they will also have staff dedicated to teaching these classes. Not only do the camps differ greatly in their teaching methodology but also in the qualifications of the teachers they hire.

If your main objective is for your child to learn and/or practice their second language, **it's important that the teachers are native speakers of the language your child is trying to learn**. It's also a good idea to investigate whether or not the teachers have ample teaching experience.

### 6.3.5.4 Medical Staff

It's important to **investigate the camp's medical staff** as well, especially if the camp revolves around physical activities. Campers at sports camps and adventure camps are more likely to suffer from injuries and seek medical attention.

Since a medical team is quite expensive, **many camps decide not to hire their own medical team**. In this case, if a child needs medical attention, they are **sent to a nearby healthcare center**.

Other camps **employ their own medical teams** complete with nurses, physical therapists, and even doctors. In this case, children **remain on the campus while being treated**.

If you're thinking about sending your child to a camp which consists of intense sports training or high adventure activities such as rock climbing or mountain biking, it's a good idea to choose a camp which employs their own medical team.

### 6.3.5.5 Food service

Most of the time, **camps subcontract these services from specialized companies**. Food service at the camps **varies greatly in terms of quality of the food** and the **variety of food** that the camp offers.

Additionally, the style of **food service can differ greatly**. Some camps offer **buffet style food** service where children can **order seconds**. Other camps more carefully monitor the participants' food intake and even **offer nutrition workshops** to teach participants how to monitor themselves.

It's important to **investigate the camp's style of food service**, choice of food, and whether or not the camp has options for children with allergies or food intolerances.



### 6.3.5.6 Administration and management

All camps typically have a general manager or a small administrative team to help **resolve questions or concerns**. You can always get in contact with such a person or team to resolve your doubts about the rest of the personnel at the camp. Below you'll find a list of the most valuable questions to ask.

#### **WHAT SHOULD WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THE PERSONNEL AT THE CAMP?**

- How many staff members are there per child? – especially monitors
- Who works at the camp and what titles or experience do they have?
- What specialized personnel are there and what is their experience?
- Does camp staff need to present a criminal background check before they are hired?

## 7. THE PRICE OF THE CAMPS – WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE THE PRICES OF THE CAMPS AND HOW TO EVALUATE THE PRICE DIFFERENCES

Camp prices vary greatly, and, at first glance, it may be difficult to see why. At [Ertheo](#), for example, we offer two-week residential camps which range in price from 1,150€ to 4,500€. That is, **some camps are FOUR TIMES more expensive than others**.

There are two main factors that could cause this drastic price difference. One, the camp is sold under a **well-recognized brand** and keeps prices elevated to maintain exclusivity. Two, the services the camp offers (facilities, accommodation, staff, etc.) and the **quality of those services is far greater** than the service quality of the cheaper camp.

Let's explore how facilities and camp personnel could greatly affect the price of a summer camp.

- Investigate whether all activities are carried out on the same premises or if they'll need to take a bus to travel back and forth between facilities.
- Ask for photos of the rooms and the rest of the camp facilities.
- Ask how many participants are assigned to a room.

### 7.1 QUALITY OF THE FACILITIES

As discussed earlier, the **most expensive factors to running a sports camp are accommodation and personnel**. In the case of accommodation, the camp must either rent out the accommodation or buy it and continuously pay for maintenance. Either way, accommodation is costly.

The price of accommodation varies depending on the type of accommodation that the camp features. Some camps feature luxury accommodation which includes: single or double rooms with their own bathrooms, a game room, a gym, sports facilities, a pool, etc. Other camps feature more modest accommodation where many participants share bedrooms and bathrooms.

As parents, we have to decide whether or not luxurious accommodation is worth the price. **Will our children enjoy the experience just as much if they're required to share a bathroom with other camp participants?**

Fortunately, most camps provide ample information about the accommodation they offer, so **it's relatively easy to compare prices in terms of the camps' facilities**. Not so fortunately, comparing the quality of the camps' staff is a bit more difficult.

## 7.2 QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF CAMP PERSONNEL

Not every camp offers information about the ratio of personnel to campers, the type of personnel they hire and/or the experience that staff members have. However, one thing is for sure – if the camp is cheap, they surely don't invest much in their personnel.

The most important thing to take into account is **the number of staff members assigned to each child** and the staff members' **professional experience**, especially in the case of trainers and teachers. In some elite golf camps, for example, there's one professional trainer assigned to every two to three camp participants. Such professional, exclusive attention costs significantly more than training featuring one coach per every 20 participants.

This **exclusive attention** from the coaching staff does not guarantee that your child will have a better time at camp, but it certainly **guarantees that they will learn more**. That being said, remember to always keep in mind your main objectives when choosing a camp. If your main objective is for your child to learn more, you should certainly investigate the ratio of personnel to campers and invest in more personalized training. If your main objective is for your child to have a good time, this ratio is less important.



## 7.3 SERVICES INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Other considerable costs that could raise the price of a camp are additional services included in the price. Some camps, for example, include **excursions** with tickets to water parks included in the price of the camp. Other camps have really **high quality** food that contributes to the camp's higher price.

In conclusion, it's important to investigate the accommodation, camp personnel, and if additional services are included in the price. All of which can help you to determine whether or not the camp offers good value for its price.

In general, you have several different options when it's time to make a reservation for a summer camp: book directly through the camp, book with an agency like [Ertheo](#), or book through some other summer camp portal.

We have **over 17 years of experience advising parents** about the best summer camps for their children. Having said that, we firmly believe that booking with [Ertheo](#) is **your best option** if you want to **be sure that all your objectives will be met** and that your child will have a **fulfilling, enriching experience**.

Nevertheless, we decided to outline the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

### 8.1 RESERVE THROUGH A CAMP PORTAL

A portal for camps is a website that offers a large quantity of all types of programs on the same webpage. These portals are similar to websites like Booking.com except instead of selling hotel rooms, they sell summer camps.

#### ADVANTAGES

The main advantage of portals is that they offer a large quantity of camps. Portals are certainly a great place to begin the search for camps.

#### DISAVANTAGES

The main disadvantage of these portals is the absence of personalized counsel about each camp. They offer so many programs that it's almost impossible for personnel to get to know the characteristics of each one. Rather, these portals simply transmit data, capture clients, and send them information about the camps.

### 8.2 RESERVAR DIRECTAMENTE CON EL CAMPAMENTO

For many day camps, as well as residential camps with a more local focus, there is only one way to make a reservation – directly with the camp. These camps don't work with agencies or portals.

#### ADVANTAGES

In some cases, reserving directly with the camp can turn out to be cheaper than booking with a portal or an agency.

#### DISAVANTAGES

Unfortunately, the disadvantages of booking directly with camps greatly outweigh the advantages.

First of all, by booking directly with the camp, you'll have to do all the research yourself. That is, you'll have to research all the various camps available, the programs

they offer, the prices of the programs, the dates, etc. Remember all the various points we discussed in chapter 5? You'll have to research them all, contact the camps, and get answers in order to be sure you're sending your child to the right program. It could be a good idea to do your own research to save money, but the research is certainly tedious and time consuming.

Secondly, and even more importantly, if you contact the camp directly, they'll always claim to be the best option for your child. That is, they'll never offer impartial advice, so it'll be more difficult to complete objective, unbiased research. Instead, you're likely to find numerous camps that all seem like attractive options.

### 8.3 RESERVE THROUGH AN AGENCY SUCH AS ERTHEO

Agencies, such as [Ertheo](#), offer various camps and programs. However, they typically offer fewer programs than portals. That being said, personnel working for agencies are usually experts in the camps and programs that they offer. Below, we discuss the advantages and disadvantages of booking with an agency.

#### ADVANTAGES

One of the main benefits of using an agency to find and book a summer camp is that good agencies have **already completed the pre-selection process** and **only offer the best programs**. For example, at [Ertheo](#), we are experts in the programs we offer. We have visited the camps and **know the staff behind each organization**. We know all the details about every program including the age requirements, total hours of training/language classes, boy to girl ratio, monitor/trainer/teacher to participant ratio, etc.)

In addition, since we have no preference for one camp over another, we can offer you **100% unbiased advice** when helping you choose the right camp for your child and their unique needs. Many clients contact us asking for more information about a particular camp. After we get to know the client, however, we realize that a different camp is more suited to the needs of their child. Unbiased advice can be extremely helpful when looking for the right summer camp for your child.

Furthermore, we don't just respond to questions and clarify doubts regarding programs we offer. Our team works hard to ensure that our clients choose the best option for their children. Much of our counsel, therefore, is **dedicated to discovering our clients' objectives, and the objectives of their children**.

This process of choosing the right camp or high performance academy can last for weeks and include various phone calls and emails before our clients come to a conclusion. Fortunately, we can attend to our clients in seven different languages including: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, German, and Arabic. At [Ertheo](#), we try our best to attend to all our clients in their native languages to make the entire process easier.

Moreover, **we always protect our clients**. As an agency dealing with children, we have a special relationship with the programs we work with. If a client comes to us with a problem,

we have **direct access to the camp personnel** including the administrative team and management. The organizations take our opinions, our praises, and our complaints very seriously. They make us their priority and **work hard to immediately solve any problem or incident** that we bring to their attention.

Finally, we also offer additional services that some camps and portals don't offer such as **cancellation insurance, medical insurance, and travel insurance.**

In summary, agencies such as [Ertheo](#), can offer you completely unbiased counsel from the very beginning when you're still in the pre-selection process until the very end when your child is returning home from the camp.

## DISADVANTAGES

At [Ertheo](#), we **don't offer day camps** or small residential camps with a local focus. There are too many of these small camps to get to know the details of each one. We would never be able to offer advice as experts.

Additionally, booking with an agency like Ertheo can turn out to be a bit **more expensive** than booking directly with the camp. At the end of the day, we do need to support ourselves to be able to continue offering our services. But, with all the support we offer, the time parents save, and the additional services we offer our clients, booking with an agency like Ertheo can be **well worth the investment.**

## 8.4 HOW TO TELL IF AN AGENCY IS PROFESSIONAL AND/OR TRUSTWORTHY

It's a good idea to contact a few agencies or camps before deciding to make a reservation. The idea is to find the ideal agency to make a reservation with.

You want to book with an agency whose agents know a great deal about various camps and can offer detailed explanations for their recommendations and suggestions. **Call up an agency and ask some detailed questions.** See how they respond. Do they seem knowledgeable and honest?

If you're not sure what questions to ask, we put together this **short list of questions you can ask** to get a good idea **about the knowledge and professionalism of the agency:**

- Does the camp offer a special menu for those who suffer from celiac disease?
- What have been the ratios of nationalities at the camp in past years?
- What camp do you recommend for a child who wants to improve their English/football/tennis/etc. skills?

Pay attention to their honesty and their expertise. Did they agents seem honest? Did they seem knowledgeable about the questions you asked? Then, based on the answers you receive, you can decide what company you want to book with.

In our 17 years advising parents about camps for their children, we've noticed some common concerns that always arise among parents. In this section, we respond to frequently asked questions that parents have when shopping for the perfect camp.

### 9.1 GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMPS

#### WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE AT A CAMP?

Participants have a very busy schedule while at camp. They are constantly participating in activities. They wake up early, tidy up, and then head to breakfast. Then, they follow a specific schedule of planned activities. They spend most of the morning and part of the afternoon participating in the camp's main activity which is usually some sport and/or language classes. At midday, they take a break for lunch.

Once they finish with the main activities, campers get a short break where they can clean-up, rest, or call their families until dinner time. After dinner, campers have the opportunity to participate in various fun activities organized by the camp for camp participants. Of course, campers are not obligated to participate. They can rest or spend their time in the residency enjoying the facilities, games rooms, TV rooms, etc. until it's time to go to bed.

During weekends, camps usually have some kind of half-day or full-day excursion prepared for the participants. The excursions usually include sight-seeing, shopping, attending a theme park, etc.

#### HOW ARE ROOMMATES CHOSEN?

Campers are separated primarily by age and gender. Then, the camps usually try to group participants so that each room is rich in diversity and children have to practice their second languages.

If parents reserve far enough in advance, camps typically accept parents' requests for siblings or friends to share a room provided that they are of similar ages. This option is a good idea for young children or very introverted children. Typically, however, we recommend children to room with other campers they don't know. That way they can make new friends with other children from other countries and other cultures.

#### CAN PARENTS VISIT THE CAMP?

As a general rule, parents are not permitted to visit the camps. These camps were designed for participants to spend some time away from home, away from their parents. By spending time away, they leave their comfort zones, and they learn to manage on their own, to mature, and to make their own decisions.

Often, visits from parents are counterproductive. It takes a few days from children to adapt to their new environment away from home. Often times, when parents come to visit, the

child experiences a relapse in their progress, and they begin to feel the same melancholy feeling they felt at the beginning of the camp.

We understand that it can be difficult to spend days or weeks without seeing your child, especially if it's their first time away from home. But, we can assure you, there's no reason to worry. They are perfectly cared for at all times, and you can speak to them daily. By not visiting your child at camp, you're ensuring that both you and your child have a more satisfactory experience.

### **WHAT'S ACCOMMODATION LIKE AT THE CAMP?**

Participants usually stay in university residences that are empty during the summer months. They most often come complete with dining rooms, sports facilities, and rooms for entertainment. Bedrooms are typically double rooms, although some camps offer single rooms or bigger rooms which house three or more campers.

### **WHAT DO CHILDREN LEARN AT RESIDENTIAL CAMPS?**



Attending a camp is a highly recommended, unique experience where children benefit from much more than sports training and language classes. By spending time away from home, children mature greatly. They learn to appreciate what they have at home. At the same time, they learn how to make their own decisions and how to socialize with other children from different cultures and languages. They become more open-minded and self-sufficient and learn to face their fears in the pursuit of their goals.

## **AT WHAT AGE CAN CHILDREN PARTICIPATE?**

There are camps available for children from 6 to 21 years old. Most participants range from 12 – 15 years old. If your child is closer to 6 or 21 years old, we recommend that you call the camp or an agency like [Ertheo](#) to make sure that there will be children your child's age at the camp.

## **WHAT LEVEL OF ENGLISH IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN A SPORTS CAMP THAT INCLUDES LANGUAGE CLASSES?**

There is no concrete level of English level required for these camps. Nevertheless, we do recommend that if the child is going to a camp abroad, they have a good enough level to be able to communicate with personnel at the airport or on the airplane. At the end of the day however, it all depends on the child's personality and whether or not they would be comfortable asking questions if they don't understand something in the airport, on the airplane, and/or at the camp.



## **DOES MY CHILD NEED TO HAVE A SPECIFIC LEVEL OF SKILL TO PARTICIPATE IN A SPORTS CAMP?**

There are camps for all levels from beginners to experts. It's a good idea to seek counsel regarding which camps are more suitable to your child's level of play.

## 9.2 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESERVATION PROCESS

### WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE?

The price of the camps always includes: sports training, language classes (in camps which offer this option), accommodation, transportation between the camp facilities, full board, and entertainment activities.

Many camps also provide participants with athletic clothing for training and a kit which also includes a backpack and a cap.

In most cases, excursions are included.

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE?

Plane tickets are never included in the price of a camp. Transfer services in which a monitor picks up the children from the airport or train station and brings them to the camp are also usually not included in the price.

Other optional services not included in the price of the camp are:

- **Medical and travel insurance:** Medical coverage for your child in the case of an emergency while abroad.
- **Cancellation insurance:** To receive a refund in the event that an unfortunate, unforeseen circumstance prevents your child from attending the camp.

You can also **request an extra night** at an additional cost in the event that your child needs to arrive a day earlier or leave a day later than the typical camp dates.

### WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR ANYTHING ONCE MY CHILD IS ALREADY AT THE CAMP?

There are some additional expenses that you'll have to take into account when you're deciding how much money to give your children to take to camp.

**Laundry:** Some camps include laundry service in the price. In other camps, campers take their own laundry to Laundromats on campus where they pay with coins to use the machines. One wash typically costs around two pounds.

**Residency deposit:** In some cases, camps require a security deposit for the residence. They return this deposit to the participants at the end of the camp as long as they haven't damaged the room.

**Pocket change:** It's a good idea to give your children some money for the days they spend traveling to and from the camp. They might be spending a few hours in airports waiting for their gates to open or waiting for connecting flights. In the meantime, if they get hungry, they can buy themselves a snack.

\*Keep in mind that as a general rule, camps only include dinner on the day of arrival and breakfast on the day of departure. It might be difficult to time the flights exactly so that your child doesn't get hungry during the day. It's a better idea to give them some money and have them buy themselves a snack in case they get hungry.

Aside from the points mentioned above, you might want to give your child some money for excursions to be able to buy ice cream or candy or maybe even some kind of souvenir.

At the end of the day, how much money you decide to give to your child to spend at camp is a very personal decision.

### **CAN I CHANGE MY RESERVATION DATES?**

It's best to think hard about the dates you want to reserve to avoid eventually having to change them. Usually, it's possible to change the dates shortly after booking. Some camps, however, are extremely inflexible when it comes to booking and making changes. Others charge you to make changes.

### **ONCE MY CHILD IS AT CAMP, IS IT POSSIBLE TO EXTEND THEIR STAY?**

Most camps are sold out before their starting dates. That being said, it's unlikely that you'll be able to extend your child's stay once they're already at camp.

### **WHAT ARE THE CANCELLATION CONDITIONS OF EACH CAMP?**

Camps never return their reservation fees. Whether or not the camps return the rest of your money depends on their specific conditions and the cause of your cancellation. We recommend getting to know the cancellation conditions before you go ahead and make your reservation. Deciding to invest in cancellation insurance could also be a good idea.

### **WHEN SHOULD I MAKE THE RESERVATION?**

For summer camps, enrollment usually opens in December or January. We always recommend reserving as early as possible. In some camps, places never run out. Other camps have very limited space and sell out quickly, especially after April.

## 9.3 QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPORTATION TO THE CAMP

### HOW DOES TRANSER SERVICE WORK?

Children can arrive to the camps either with their parents or without them. In the case that the children travel without their parents, parents can contact a transfer service to make sure that the child gets to the camp safely.

- If you decide to accompany your child in their travel to and from the camp, we can send you detailed information about how to arrive to the camp, and the arrival and departure schedules. It's also possible to either drop off or pick up without doing both.

- In case you're not available to pick up or drop off your child, all the camps offer optional transfer services.

### WHAT DOES A TRANSFER SERVICE CONSIST OF?

If you purchase a transfer service, a monitor from the camp will pick up your child from the airport or train station upon their arrival and take them to the camp. Then, at the end of the camp, the monitor will take the child back to the airport. Since this is an additional service, it does come at an extra cost.

Monitors usually wait for the participants in the arrivals section of the airport in uniform so they're easier for the children to find. They also usually hold some kind of paper or poster with the camp or academy's name. Additionally, they accept calls during the 24 hours before the child's arrival in case of flight cancellations and/or delays.

Each camp has specific arrival and departure schedules. It's very important to research these schedules before booking your flights. Some camps receive more than 100 participants at the start of the program. Therefore, they require that participants arrive at predetermined times. In this way, personnel can organize the transfer services effectively, grouping the children whenever possible to avoid unnecessary trips to and from the airport.

For this reason, it's very important to consult the arrival and departure schedules of the camp before booking your flights. Often times, if participants arrive outside of their specific arrival window, the camps raise the price of the transfer service.

### CAN MY SON OR DAUGHTER TRAVEL ALONE ON THE AIRPLANE?

Yes, these days, airports have staff members responsible for accompanying minors from the check-in desk all the way to the airplane. Sending your child on an airplane alone might

sound a bit unnerving, but airports are used to dealing with these situations and do what they can to make the experience more comfortable for both you and your child.

**AT WHAT AGE CAN MY CHILD TRAVEL ALONE IN THE AIRPLANE?**

This is really a question of the maturity and readiness of your child. We've had parents send children as young as 10 – 11 years old on an airplane to a camp abroad. We do recommend that your child has a basic level of English skills to be able to communicate with flight attendants and airport employees.

Also, some airline companies require you to purchase the Unaccompanied Minor service. See more information below.

**WHAT IS THE UNACCOMPANIED MINOR SERVICE?**

The Unaccompanied Minor service is an additional service that airline companies offer to supervise minors that are traveling alone. By contracting this service, minors are attended by airline personnel from check-in all the way to their destination, including during transfers.

As a general rule, airline companies require children ages 14 and under to contract the service, but each company has their own specific rules and requirements.

Low cost airlines typically don't offer the Unaccompanied Minor service. We recommend that you research the airlines rules and requirements regarding minors traveling alone before booking your ticket.

**DO I HAVE TO NOTIFY THE CAMP THAT MY CHILD NEEDS THE UNACCOMPANIED MINOR SERVICE?**

If you're contracting this service with the airline company, you must also request this service from the camp. The airline company needs the personal information of the monitor responsible for picking up the child from the airport (full name, identification number, and phone number).



This service comes with an additional benefit. In contrast to the standard transfer service, with the Unaccompanied Minor service, the camp monitor not only accompanies the child to the airport, but also waits at the airport for an additional hour after the child's plane's scheduled take off time. That way, in the event of a cancellation or mishap, the child doesn't have to wait alone until they can take the next plane home.

You can solicit the Unaccompanied Minor service at the same time that you reserve the flight. Likewise, you should inform us that you have contracted this service promptly so that we can reserve the service with the camp. Remember, we also need to give the airline monitor the personal information of the camp monitor responsible for picking up your child at the airport.



## 9.4 QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMP RULES & SECURITY

### **HOW CAN I CONTACT MY CHILD DURING THEIR STAY AT CAMP?**

Campers always have telephone access during their free time. Most children communicate with their parents with their mobile phones since the camps tend to have good WiFi connection.

Otherwise, the camps have landlines which participants can use. They can also use the public telephones which require coin payment.

In the event of an emergency where you need to speak to your child immediately, you can call the camp's emergency number. Supervisors and monitors will locate your child right away and put you in contact with them.

We don't recommend calling your child frequently as phone calls disrupt camp activities. Rather, it's better to let your child contact you during their free time.

It's completely normal to worry about your children, especially if they're not contacting you during their free time. But, keep in mind, that most of the time this is great news as it demonstrates that they are having a great time.

### **WHAT ARE THE CAMP RULES?**

Before the start of the camp, you'll receive a pamphlet listing the camp rules. It's important for your child to get to know these rules because breaking them could mean receiving a warning or even expulsion from the camp.

### **HOW ARE CAMPERS SUPERVISED DURING THE DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES ON AND OFF THE CAMP'S CAMPUS?**

Each organization has a team of monitors that supervises participants during all camp activities. In fact, all participants are under 24 hour surveillance. During the trainings or English classes, coaches and teachers supervise the children. Otherwise, camp monitors supervise the children during all other camp activities and excursions.

## 10. CAMP ARRIVAL MANUAL

It's almost time... Wondering how you prepare for the camp? Don't worry. In this section, we discuss everything you need to know to properly prepare for your child's stay at camp.

### 10.1 BEFORE ARRIVING

The days prior to the start of camp can be a bit chaotic and overwhelming both for the children attending and their parents. Children and parents might be nervous about the trip, packing and preparation, the camp itself, etc.

That being said, getting informed about how to prepare and what to expect in the first few days of camp is one of the best ways to ease both your nerves and the nerves of your child. That's why, in this section, we discuss some of the most important concerns of parents and children in the final days before the start of the camp: how does the transfer service work, communication between the participants and their family, how to face certain situations that may arise within the first few days of camp, etc.

#### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Before you arrive, you'll be informed about various emergency contact phone numbers. If you call one of these numbers, your child will be located immediately, and you'll be able to speak to them right away.

#### TRANSFER

If you have reserved the transfer service, it's important to send the flight details to those in charge of the transfer service sufficiently ahead of time. They'll need to know the times of landing and departure and which airports the children are flying to and from. Keep in mind that hundreds of children will be using the transfer service which makes the process quite complex. The sooner you send your child's flight information to the organization, the better they'll be able to organize and manage your child's transfer which means shorter waiting times.



## 10.2 WHAT TO PACK IN YOUR SUITCASE

If you've already reserved a camp, you've probably received a concrete list of things to take to camp with you. In the event that that's not the case, here's a list of materials that all camps recommend the children bring.

### 10.2.1 Hygiene products

Your child should bring all the materials they use daily for their personal hygiene:

- Comb
- Shampoo
- Shower gel
- Shower sponge
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Hair dryer
- Deodorant
- Tissues

### 10.2.2 Clothes and shoes

The camps tend to recommend bringing enough clothes for one week. On one hand, the children need clothes and training equipment for their training sessions. On the other hand, they also need casual clothing to attend language classes and excursions as well as entertainment activities around campus.

#### **CLOTHES FOR DAY TO DAY LIFE**

Children will spend most of their time in sports clothing. Nevertheless, they'll need some casual clothing for excursions. Two or three pairs of jeans, some T-shirts, and some comfortable sneakers would be enough.

#### **CLOTHES FOR TRAININGS**

The camps tend to provide participants with a T-shirt or sports equipment. One shirt, however, is not enough to cover all the training in one week. Participants will need to bring at least six T-shirts and six pairs of shorts to wear while attending trainings as well as the necessary footwear and equipment required for their sport.

We also recommend that participants bring the most basic sports clothes since repetitive use and the laundry service could potentially ruin good materials.

#### **MARKING CLOTHES AND LAUNDRY BAGS**

To avoid losses and confusion, it's important that all clothes are marked with the participants' names.

The camps also ask all participants to bring their own net bags to store their dirty laundry so that it doesn't mix with the rest of the campers' laundry.

### 10.3 THE DAY OF ARRIVAL: HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ARRIVE AT THE CAMP?

Now that you've packed your bags, it's time to get to know important information for arriving at the camp from arriving at the airport to arriving at the camp's accommodation.

Camps typically don't offer individual transfer services. Rather, they group children that arrive at the destination airport at similar times so they can transport various children to the camp at a time.

It can be quite difficult to calculate when our children will arrive at the camp. Don't forget that once they land, they'll have to pass through airport security, pick up their baggage, and make their way to arrivals where they'll find their monitors waiting. Then, they'll wait for the rest of their group to arrive before they start their journey to the camp.

Then, you'll also have to take into account the distance between the airport and the camp. Depending on the camp, the journey from the airport to the camp can take between 30 minutes and two hours.

Two recommendations:

- Make sure your child has cash on them while they travel so that they can buy a snack in the airport.

- Remind your child to keep their phone charged and to contact you as soon as they arrive at the camp so that you know they've arrived safely. The camps have WiFi connection so that participants can connect and contact their families for free.



## 10.4 COMMUNICATION WITH THE FAMILY

Most children contact their parents with their own phones. The camps have free WiFi that participants can use in their free time to talk with their families.

### THE FIRST DAY

It's important that you explain to your child that they must contact you when they arrive. Many children get caught up in their nerves and emotions as they arrive and forget to contact their parents causing them to worry unnecessarily. Remind them to remember to call you.

Also, it's a good idea to make sure that your child knows how to connect to WiFi and that they'll ask a monitor for the password when they arrive.

### THE REST OF THE DAYS

Your child is personally responsible for contacting you during the rest of their time at the camp. In their free time, after having finished the day's main activities, they'll have access to their mobile phones.

Once you know the camp's timetable, you can establish the times and the frequency with which your child should call you. Remember, if your child forgets to contact you, it's probably a good sign that they're having a great time. Nevertheless, in the case of an emergency, you can contact the camp's emergency line to get into contact with your child.

## 10.5 THE END OF ARRIVAL WEEK

Remember that intermediary agencies like [Ertheo](#) are not in the office during the weekends and that the camp organizations manage all the arrivals. To compensate, we do all that we can during our office hours to prevent any unfortunate incidences.

Additionally, our 24 hour call center has a list of all the emergency numbers of all the camps we work with. If you call us outside of our normal office hours, we can provide you with an emergency number you can use to call the camp and contact your child.

### 10.5.1 What do children do on the first day of camp?

#### INTRODUCTION AND VISIT TO THE FACILITIES

The first day of camp is dedicated to managing the arrival of all the participants. Little by little, participants arrive and are assigned to their rooms. A monitor shows them the facilities and explains basic camp procedures including the camp schedule, where they have to go to train, where they eat breakfast, where their classes take place, etc.

It's a good idea to review with your child the importance of paying attention to all these details on their first day. Also, remind them to ask questions if they're unsure about something.

## **LEVEL TESTS**

On the first or second day of camp, all campers participate in a series of tests to determine their appropriate language groups and training groups.

## **ENGLISH LEVEL TESTS**

The camps that include language classes carry out language testing on the first day of camp to determine the language skills of the participants. Then, the participants are placed into groups based upon their skill level. That way, they are always taught material adjusted to their specific level and advancement. Nevertheless, if the students feel that their level is superior or inferior to their placement, they can address the issue with their teacher who will move them to a more suitable group.

## **SPORTS TRAINING TESTS**

During the first days of camp, the children are grouped by age. Coaches and trainers examine the skill level of the players and then place them into groups depending on their level. The camps try to group players of similar levels together so that all players get the most out of the training sessions. As is the case with language classes, players who feel like their level is superior or inferior to the level of other players in their group can speak to their trainer about changing groups.

## **COMMUNICATION OF ACTIVITIES**

Once the children are settled in, the monitors will explain the itinerary for the next few days including the camp rules, eating schedule, classes, and training. They'll also explain how to hear about camp organized activities, who to talk to in the event of questions or concerns, when and how to contact their families, etc.

## 11. ADAPTING TO THE CAMP

### 11.1 FIRST DAYS OF ADAPTATION

Attending a camp can mean a big change that not all children handle the same way. The first few days are crucial to ensuring that more anxious children get the most out of the experience. These children have to leave their comfort zones and face new situations, away from their homes and their families while making new friends and adapting to new timetables. Often times they have to do all that in a new language. Attending a residential camp can be a real challenge for these young children.

Ultimately, each child is different and needs a different amount of time to adapt to all the changes they feel during the first few days at camp. But eventually, all children who persevere have an unforgettable experience and experience tremendous personal growth. Eventually all participants overcome their feelings of homesickness and fear of the unknown and adapt to the new language. Their ultimate success teaches them to face their fears because, as is the case with sleep away camps, the reward is often worth the initial struggle.

### 11.2 HOW TO ACT WHEN YOUR CHILD FEELS HOMESICK

If it's your child's first time away from home, it could take a few days for them to adapt. Below, we provide some advice for facing the situation and helping your child adapt as fast as possible.

Although 98% of participants don't have problems adapting, every year we experience some cases of children who find it more difficult to adapt to life away from home. Fortunately, if we take the proper steps, the problem can be solved rather quickly. These children who experience difficulties in the first few days of camp can overcome their anxiety and end up not only having a great time but also experiencing immense personal growth.

#### **PREVENTION ALWAYS HELPS**

Talk to your child before they go to the camp. Explain to them that it's normal to feel homesick during the first few days but that this homesickness goes away soon. Let them know that if they stick it out, they'll end up having a great time.

#### **ONCE THEY'RE AT THE CAMP**

When a child is having problems adapting, their parent's reaction can play a large role in either solving the problem or making it worse.

When a child is sad or uncomfortable at a camp, everything around them seems negative. They're likely to call home and complain about their campmates, the food, or the classes. We've outlined some steps to follow to deal with the situation:

**Steps to follow: 1. Keep calm 2. Let us know. We'll take action.**

It can be quite difficult to remain calm and logical with your children when they call you from a camp, crying and telling you they want to come home. But, showing them that you're nervous and worried will only make things worse. In these cases, it's better to remain calm and get them to understand that the feeling will pass. You need to let them know that with a little patience, they'll soon get used to being away from home in a new environment, and that in the end, they'll have a great time.

The next step is to notify us about the problem so that we can contact the camp. Camp personnel know how to face these situations. From the moment that camp staff hears about a particular child having a hard time adjusting to the camp, they do everything in their power to make the child feel more comfortable. They show the child extra attention until they overcome their anxiety and start to enjoy the camp. In the end, the child returns with more than just incredible memories. They return home more mature and more independent.



[Ertheo](#) is a sports and education agency with more than 17 years of experience offering summer camps and language programs for young people all around the world.

**Our mission is to advise and help parents choose the best sports-education programs for their children to help them reach their maximum potential as both athletes and upstanding citizens.**

### *Do you need help choosing the best camp for your children?*

Choosing a camp is a complicated decision...

The key to ultimate satisfaction is in choosing the camp best suited to your needs and the needs of your children. If you have any questions or concerns, or need advice for choosing the best camp for your child, don't hesitate to contact us. We'd be delighted to help you.

**I NEED HELP**

### **EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**

At Ertheo, we offer the best sports-education programs to suit all levels and objectives. We offer everything from long-term intensive academic and sports training programs to short-term creative, artistic, and/or language-oriented summer camps. Whatever you choose, every program is designed to provide children with unforgettable experiences that shape them into great athletes and even better people.



**Educational experiences** Many of our sports programs offer language courses and promote cultural awareness and intercultural harmony.

Young athletes who enroll in our programs and sports camps learn fundamental values and inspirational life lessons. By living together with other athletes from all over the world, they learn to respect others, to share with others, and even the importance of tidiness and organization.

**Sports experiences** Student athletes form stronger values and live healthier lifestyles.

Our sports camps and programs are designed to improve young athletes' physical fitness, technique, and mental strength on the field while at the same time teaching values such as discipline, hard work, and responsibility.

**Life Experience** Our sports programs offer young student athletes the life experience they need to grow into mature, responsible, confident adults.

Participants in our sports camps and programs spend time away from home where they have the opportunity to grow and mature as self-sufficient individuals in a safe and supervised environment.

In the next link, you can find more information [about us and our team](#). Ream more about our social initiative in our section about [Corporate Social Responsibility](#).

## We hope this guide has been helpful!

One last thing! We'd like to wish your children a great learning experience full of immense personal growth and countless unforgettable memories.



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**Best wishes from our team at Ertheo!**