

Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County

Summer Camp Checklist

What to look for when selecting a summer camp or program – A Quality Checklist

What are the program's health, safety and nutrition policies and procedures?

Ask about the sign-in/out policies, medication policy, discipline policy, lifeguard certification/water safety policy, field trip and transportation policies, handling of sick children and missing children policy. Ask if the program follows any established nutritional guidelines. Ask if their policies are in writing and if the facility meets local and state legal requirements.

Is the staff screened?

Has the owner/operator/director of the program been fingerprinted through the FBI as required by law? Has the camp, although not required by law, conducted a check of local law enforcement records or a statewide criminal correspondence check through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for all staff? What additional screening methods does the program employ?

What is the staff/child ratio and group size of the program?

Florida's maximum staff-to-child ratio for school-age children is 1-to-25. National quality standards recommend between 1-to-10 and 1-to-15 for children age 5–18, and group sizes no larger than 30.

Is staff well trained?

Ask about staff experience and education in early childhood/school-age care, recreation, serving children with special needs, CPR/First Aid/Lifeguarding and if appropriately licensed when transporting children.

Is the program licensed or accredited?

Summer programs are not required to be licensed or accredited. Licensure and accreditation ensure that basic health and safety standards are met. Accreditation often requires additional quality standards.

Are parents welcome to visit at all times? Are family activities offered?

Programs should be accessible and welcoming to parents and families at all times.

Is there a daily lesson plan?

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Ask to review a typical lesson plan. Quality programs provide more than continuous free play. Plans should be consistent with the philosophy of the program and should include indoor, outdoor, quiet, active, staff-planned, child-initiated and free choice activities.

Is the facility space adequate for the number of children enrolled?

Is there enough room for all program activities? Outdoor programs should include indoor or sheltered areas for resting, respite from the sun and for bad weather days.

What are the hours of operation, fees and payment procedures?

Do drop off and pick up hours and procedures ensure that your child is receiving proper adult supervision? Are there fees for enrollment, special activities, late payments or late pickups?