

Perspectives on Summer Camp

Across the US and many other countries, thousands of children attend summer camp. Specialty camps such as assistive technology, cancer, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, spinal cord, sports, ventilator, wheelchair and others also exist. During my practice in pediatric rehabilitation, I have had the fortunate opportunity to attend various camps and want to share a few of my experiences.

For many of the campers, it is the first time they have ever spent a night away from home. As difficult as it is for the campers, it can be just as challenging for parents. It may also be the first time they are entrusting the care of their child to caregivers outside of the hospital. The camps consist of dedicated health care providers, physicians, nurses, therapists and most importantly volunteers.

The camps provide an amazing experience for these children. The ability to be in a large group of their own peers for an extended period of time. The opportunity for the first time for many, to participate in activities like swimming, kayaking, rock climbing, zip lining, arts and crafts, archery and many more. For many, it is the highlight of the year. Laughter, smiles, crying, homesickness, and new friendships all occur.

So please, encourage parents to send their children to camp. It is a life changing experience for all.

(Dr. Neufeld has attended assistive technology, ventilator, disability sports, wheelchair and muscular dystrophy camp.)

Sincerely

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Editor-in-Chief