



National
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on ADHD
A Program of CHADD

Ask the Expert Webinar Chat Series

Presented by the
National Resource Center on ADHD



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A Program of CHADD

www.Help4ADHD.org
(800) 233-4050
Help4ADHD@CHADD.org

Ask the Expert

**Finding the right summer camp
for your child affected by ADHD**

John Willson, MS, LRT/CTRS



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would like to talk with a Health Information Specialist**

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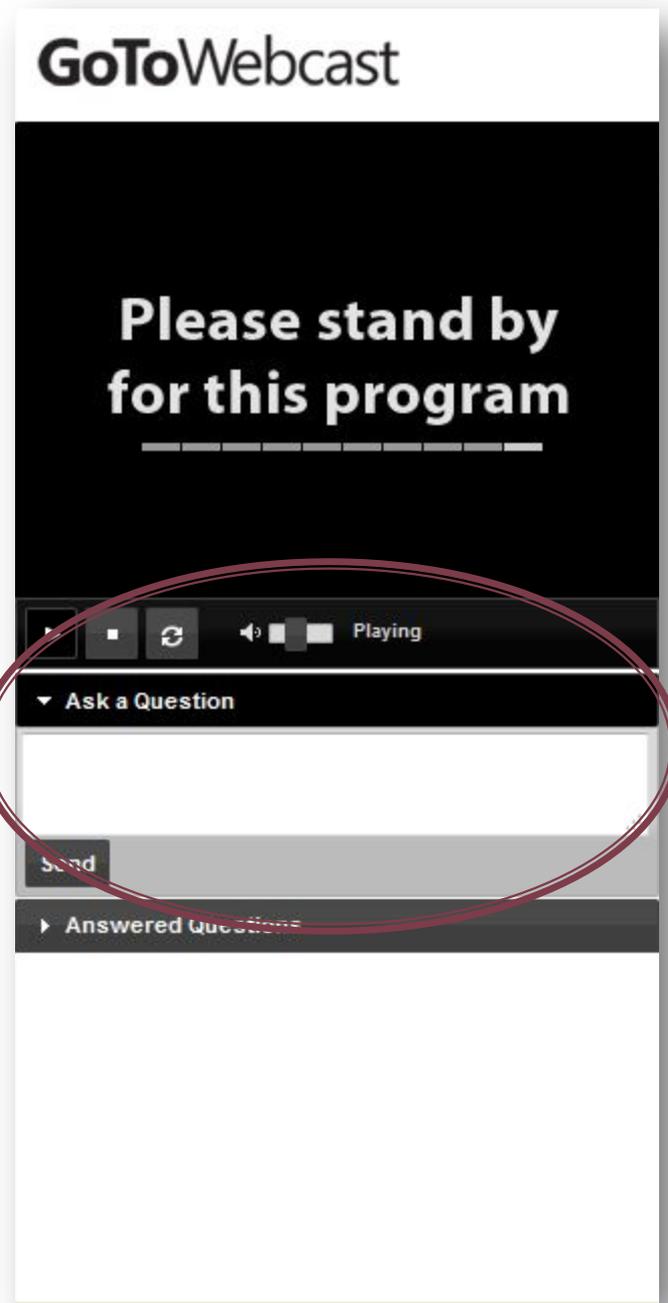
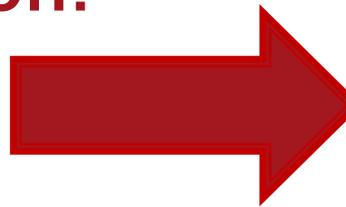
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To Ask A Question:





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Executive Director, SOAR



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Step 1:

Determine the needs of your child.

- ▶ Identify your child's needs and strengths.
 - ▶ Identify your child's interests.
 - ▶ Consider your child's supervision needs.
 - ▶ Identify the level of structure necessary.
- 

Step 2:

Determine the needs of your family.

- ▶ Assess your comfort level with the length of the camp.
 - ▶ Assess your financial resources.
 - ▶ Consider the needs of siblings.
 - ▶ Discuss childcare issues.
 - ▶ Consider the respite needs of your family.
- 

Questions to Consider

What is the direct service staff to student ratio?

- ▶ This ratio is generally different from the one advertised by programs and includes only direct service or “cabin” staff.
 - ▶ A ratio of 1 staff to 3 or 4 students truly provides the campers with the structure necessary to be successful.
- 

What are the qualifications of direct service staff?

- ▶ Many programs hire staff with a range of skills and experiences.
 - ▶ Look for programs who primarily hire counselors with experience and maturity to meet the needs of your child.
- 

How does the program identify and develop the strengths and abilities of the campers?

- Many campers come to camp knowing much more about their areas of challenge and frustration than they do about their strengths and abilities.
 - Look for a program that encourages them to focus on identifying and developing their talents and abilities.
 - Insure the staff capitalize on these strengths and abilities throughout the entire course by encouraging their use and development.
 - Excellent programs will have staff discuss how these abilities can be developed once the student returns home.
 - Your looking for an environment that will have your child come home more cognizant of their talents and gifts.
- 

How does the program accommodate for specific ADHD characteristics?

- Ask about the characteristics your child finds most challenging (e.g. impulsivity, organization, etc).
 - Is the program up to date on the most current information about these types of children?
 - Are they built specifically to accommodate the characteristics of ADHD, or have they found ways to accommodate this population as part of their service?
 - Some children will excel at any camp, while others truly need an opportunity designed just for them.
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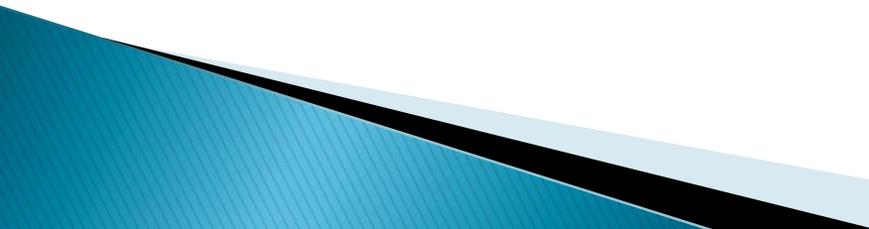
What is the protocol for distributing medication?

- ▶ Be sensitive to a protocol that does not single out your child.
- ▶ Look for a program that has staff trained on all aspects of medication administration, including information about:
 - ❖ The common types taken by youth with ADHD
 - ❖ Their purpose and contraindications
 - ❖ A standard protocol for administering medications

What type of feedback system is utilized?

- ▶ Does the program offer a written evaluation?
- ▶ Discover what is included in the evaluation.
 - ❖ Does it contain a review of the student's performance?
 - ❖ Is there a component offering feedback indicating some of your child's strengths?
 - ❖ Does it reflect the growth towards given goals and objectives?
 - ❖ Finally, does the evaluation have recommendations regarding the continued growth and maturation of your child?

How does the staff handle problem behaviors?

- Consider setting up a scenario you have seen in your own home or had reported from school and ask the camp how it might handle the situation.
 - Does the program utilize a variety of techniques to help young people get the most from the experience?
 - If negative behavior occurs, does the program have an organized behavior management philosophy?
 - Does the program utilize behavioral components that provide healthy structure and consistency, natural and logical consequences, and generous amounts of praise and positive feedback?
- 

What dietary modifications are in place or are possible?

- Food is critical to the camp experience. It effects morale, health, and overall impression of the child's camp experience.
 - You will want to insure the food is kid-friendly and still will meet the nutritional needs of the campers.
 - Does the menu avoid potential behavioral triggers like red and yellow dyes, caffeine, and high levels of salt?
 - Is the program willing to accommodate special dietary needs?
 - Finally, it may be interesting to find out if the students are involved in their own menu decisions.
- 

Does the camp have references?

- Ask for the names and phone numbers of two families with a child similar to yours and contact these families for feedback.
 - Search for Camp reviews online.
- 

How is personal hygiene handled?

- ▶ Does the program structure personal hygiene times?
- ▶ During these times, students should be required to:
 - ❖ Brush their teeth at appropriate times.
 - ❖ Change socks and underwear regularly.
 - ❖ Shower on a regular basis.
 - ❖ Wash their hands before every meal and after every bathroom use.

Is the program Accredited?

- The American Camping Association (ACA) is the accepted accrediting agency that does an excellent job of evaluating camps in regards to maintaining industry standards and effective risk management.

Involve your Child in the Decision

- Ask your child to develop a list of questions that they would ask the camp representative.
- Parents are able to increase the level of personal ownership and investment on the part of the child by wrapping them into the decision-making process.
- Such initial investment will further enhance the gains from the summer program.

Have a joy-filled and successful summer!!





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Ask the Expert

A Pattern of Struggles: ADHD and the Older Adult

Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 3 p.m.

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