

# NEW JERSEY **Family**

## Here's Why We're Sending Our Kid to Summer Camp

While I was rejoicing that camps could open, most parents were still saying “no way” to in-person activities

BY RONNIE KOENIG | Published: June 19, 2020



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A few weeks ago, my husband and I made the decision to send our 8-year-old son to camp. At the time, we didn't know if summer camps would even be allowed to operate but we knew that if they did, we wanted him to go. Only recently did I realize what a controversial decision this was. In my community here in Central Jersey, it seems like most parents have decided to opt out of in-person activities for the summer, either signing their kids up for virtual camps or nothing at all. When a local camp recently cancelled what was to be their 45<sup>th</sup> season, I was shocked until I read in an email from the camp director that it was because not enough families were signing up.

To us, the thought of our guy hanging around the house with nothing to do sounded worse than having to deal with the rules and regulations that camps will have in place. And while I'm sure camp will look very different this year than it has in the past, we had some strong reasons for deciding to send him.

**Safety Measures Will Be Strict** – Camps that will open are taking very serious steps to ensure the health and safety of campers and counselors. From purchasing PPE to instituting temperature checks, limiting group sizes and canceling field trips, the protocol for opening has been well thought out – and must pass muster with the DOH.

When I spoke to Todd Rothman co-director Deerkill Day Camp in Suffern, New York, he pointed out that in a way, camp is actually the safest place for kids to be this summer because of all these strict rules and regulations. I know that if my son is home and spending the day meeting up with friends and riding bikes, there's less likelihood he will adhere to these rules than in a supervised setting. Ultimately, we trust that the camp will be taking every precaution to ensure the safest environment possible.

**Zoom Overload** – Some kids have done really well with online learning and for other kids there's a point where the screens become more detrimental than helpful. Although our kid's teachers have done a fantastic job, we're definitely at the point where we need a break from all of the video conferencing.

**We Weighed the Risk** – For some parents, there is good reason to be scared about re-entering the world. For kids who are immunocompromised, summer camp is definitely not an option. Thankfully, our son is healthy and while we know that there is some risk in attending camp, there is risk in all things and at some point, we need to begin to a return to a semblance of normal childhood. Because the statistics show that children are primarily not as affected by COVID-19 – a **CDC study** showed that among the nearly 150,000 cases of COVID between Feb 12 and April 2 only 1.7%

were in children – we are ok with letting him join his peers in a limited capacity for summer fun.

Ultimately there is no right or wrong decision but for us, the chance for our guy to be among other kids again and have a return to regular kid activities like sports, swimming and arts and crafts is invaluable.

Kids need to be outdoors. Kids need to be with their friends. Parents need to work. So, off to summer camp he will go, with the reasonable amount of worry that surely every parent feels but also no regrets.