

Making Sure Your Child's Daycare or Camp Experience Is Safe

Whether you're sending your child to daycare or off to summer camp for a few weeks, their safety is your top priority. Plenty of programs are ready and able to provide your child with educational opportunities, [social interaction](#), and fun, but the first step is making sure the environment is safe. Here are some things [Jasper Mountain](#) wants you to know to ensure your child's wellbeing as they work and play under the guidance and care of others.

Confidently Research Who's Teaching and Caring for Your Child

Whether you're sending your child to a daycare center or a summer camp, you have to be able to trust those tasked with watching over them. It's not enough to rely on the assurances of those in charge. Be prepared to ask tough questions. For instance, how does the organization choose its employees? What background checks do they go through? And how stringent is that process?

You may not be used to asking questions like these, but be brave. Your child is worth it. Basic strategies like making eye contact and maintaining good posture help you present yourself confidently. If [you're nervous](#) about asking direct questions, start by putting yourself into other uncomfortable situations. You'll get more used to it and build your confidence.

[Safely Ever After](#) recommends specifically asking how employees are screened and what's included in the screening, such as background checks, fingerprinting, and checking the sex offender registry. Don't be afraid to insist on meeting all the people who will be involved in your child's instruction and care. A business that has a problem accommodating that simple request may not be worth your trust.

Check for Licenses and Accreditations

This may sound obvious, but many parents don't realize that daycare centers and summer camps undergo accreditation and licensing. Daycares should have their state license and CPR/first aid certifications either [posted or readily available](#). If they don't, it's a major red flag. However, that's the bare minimum. Accreditation, though not mandatory, can be a good sign that you've found a quality daycare center. Summer camps don't always face the same requirements, but organizations like the [American Camp Association](#) offer accreditation to thousands of individual camps.

Talk to Your Child About Safety

Make sure your child knows that they can and should tell you about anything that feels unsafe in their daycare environment. It's important to have frank conversations about personal safety and "[stranger situations](#)." Be specific. "Explain to your child some of the uncomfortable things unsafe

people may do,” says [Understood For All](#). “For instance, they may pay a lot of attention to kids and even give them presents. They may be physical with kids even when kids ask them to stop.”

Set aside time to have an unhurried conversation with your child, and think about the tone and body language you’ll use. Remember, the goal here is to educate your child and increase awareness of actions they can take, not to terrify them.

Suspicious strangers may also use inappropriate words to comment on how kids look, as well as have unusual conversations like asking a child for directions or to help them look for something, like a lost dog. The more your kids are told about specific unsafe situations, the better they understand them and the more quickly they’ll be able to report them accurately.

Drop By Unannounced

If you can, make an unscheduled stop at your child’s daycare center or camp. You don’t have to interact with your child or even let them know you’re there. You simply want to see how the show is running when the staff isn’t expecting you. Don’t think of this as rude or a sign of over-protection. A business that has a problem with your unannounced visit may have [something to hide](#).

It can be stressful sending your child off to a daycare or summer camp, out of your sight, trusting others will care for them. But if you take the necessary precautions and use the right strategies, you’ll be confident that your child can have a great time, and you can also be assured they’re safe and well-cared for.

[Jasper Mountain](#) is a treatment center dedicated to the well-being of traumatized children and their families. For more information, please visit our website or [contact us](#) today!