



FAQs for New or Prospective Campers

We're thrilled that you're considering joining us at camp! We know sending your child to camp requires a great deal of trust. Camp is truly a special place where your child will make friendships and memories to last a lifetime. We hope this information will help you feel confident in sending your child to camp with us!

- What is the cost to attend camp?
 - Thanks to our generous donors, camp is completely free of charge for all children and families!
- My child is actively on treatment. What type of medical staff is present at camp?
 - All camp sessions are fully staffed with board certified medical professionals including physicians and nurses. Camps where patients will attend (family, youth, and teen) are staffed with oncology nurses and a hem/onc fellow and/or attending from Children's of Alabama. Our camp medical team is in regular contact with the team at Children's of Alabama to discuss any needs that may arise at camp.
 - If you'd like to discuss your child's camp eligibility in regards to their current medical status, please reach out to us directly.
- My child has developmental delays or needs help with some ADLs. Are they eligible for camp?
 - We are happy to make reasonable accommodations in order to adapt activities to meet unique camper needs. Our volunteer counselors are able to assist campers with basic tasks such as brushing hair, cutting food, and getting dressed. Our volunteer counselors are not allowed to help campers with bathing/showering or toileting needs. If you have concerns about your child's particular needs, please contact us so we can discuss if camp is appropriate for them.
- My child has physical limitations or disabilities. Can they still attend camp?
 - We are committed to making camp as accessible as possible for children who may have physical limitations or disabilities. Our camp facilities, including the cabins and the pools are fully wheelchair accessible. We also have golf carts available to transport campers around campus, when needed. Our team will make activity accommodations as needed so that all campers can participate to the best of their abilities.
- What are the accommodations at camp like?
 - For family camps, each family unit will have their own private, air-conditioned cabin. For sibling, youth, and teen camps, campers are in cabins with other campers of the same gender and age group. Counselors stay in the cabins with campers. All camper beds are twin size.
- What is the food like at camp?
 - We provide three meals per day as well as plenty of snacks. Our meals are well-balanced but include plenty of kid-friendly options. We aim to have a variety of choices at each meal, however we will always offer cereal and milk at breakfast and PB&J at lunch and dinner to accommodate picky eaters.
- My child has a special diet or food allergy. Can that be accommodated for?
 - We can provide a vegetarian option for meals as well as offering some nut-free and dairy-free options, however we cannot accommodate specific food allergies or other special diets. If your child has specific dietary needs, please contact us to discuss further.

- Do you offer transportation to camp?
 - For sibling, youth, and teen camps we do offer transportation via charter bus from our office in downtown Birmingham both to and from camp. Parents can also choose to drive their child(ren) directly to camp. For family camps, families drive themselves.
- What types of activities are offered?
 - Our days at camp are full of FUN! Campers can engage in activities such as arts and crafts, wood working, archery, putt putt, basketball, swimming, boating, canoeing, dance parties, therapeutic activities, scavenger hunts, bonfires, and so much more.
- Can my child have their phone at camp?
 - In order for campers to be fully present and get the most out of their camp experience, we do not allow campers to have cell phones at camp. This allows campers to disconnect from their real world stressors for a few days and take full advantage of building relationships with the people around them. If there is a specific need during the camp session, campers and parents can get in touch with each other via camp staff. Not allowing camper phones at camp also increases camper safety and decreases risks. Camp staff may make exceptions to this policy for any special circumstances.
- What is a typical day's schedule like?
 - Our days at camp are full of fun! We will wake up around 7:00, have breakfast, then enjoy morning activities. After lunch, we will have a rest period and then enjoy more afternoon activities. After dinner, we will have a special evening program. Evening programs include things like bonfire and s'mores, game nights, pool party, silent disco, Girls/Guys Night, and our camp dance. Lights-out times are adjusted based on camper age and needs.
- What types of safety measures are in place?
 - Safety is our top priority at camp. Smile-A-Mile is proud to be a COCA Gold Ribbon Accredited camp. The COCA Gold Ribbon accreditation recognizes programs with "policies and practices, specific to their setting and population, that are documented and delivered in the course of providing a medically and emotionally safe pediatric oncology camp experience." For more details on our specific safety policies, please email us at programs@smileamile.com
- Will I get updates of how my child is doing throughout the week?
 - Absolutely! Our camp director and COO will send daily updates and photos via text. If you have a specific question or concern about your child, our staff is always available to provide an update.
- Can my child receive mail while they're at camp?
 - Since our sessions are short-term, we do not recommend sending letters via the mail, as they may arrive late. However we do encourage parents to bring "camp mail" with them to drop-off, and our staff will deliver it to your child throughout the week. Campers will have the chance to write back, if desired.
- What does my child need to pack for camp?
 - A detailed packing list will be sent to all parents/caregivers before camp.
- My child has never spent the night away from home. How can we prepare them for camp?
 - We recommend that you start having one night sleepovers, either with grandparents or aunts or friends, leading up to camp so that your child can become comfortable with spending the night in a new environment. It's also helpful to talk with your child about what to expect while at camp and what they can do if they do feel homesick. Additionally, coming to family camp together before attending a weeklong session can be a great way for kids to become comfortable at camp. We have trained professionals available at all sessions to support any specific camper needs.

If you have any other questions you'd like to talk through, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at programs@smileamile.com.