Summer 2016 is just around the corner. The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center is here to help you plan!

**Summer 2016**
How will your child be spending his or her summer? In school, camp, or at home?

- **CAMP**
- **HOME**
  - **Inside**
    - See pages 16 & 17 for indoor activities to do at home with your child
  - **Outside**
    - See pages 13-15 for family fun activities in and around Boston

- **Special Education Camp?**
- **Inclusive Camp?**

See pages 2-5 for a list of camps around Boston and the greater Boston area

- **See pgs. 6 & 7 for tips and tricks on preparing for camp**
- **See pg. 8 for a visual and pgs. 9 & 10 for a social story about camp**
This guide was created to help you plan a fun and productive summer for your child! It contains information to help you select the best options for you and your family as you begin preparing.

If you are thinking about sending your child to camp this summer, keep in mind that applications are available in March and April and enrollment deadlines hit shortly after.

Is your child ready for camp? If the answer is yes, check out our suggested summer camps on the following pages. As you explore your options, keep in mind the following questions:

- What size group would my child be most comfortable with?
- Would my child do better at a part-time or full-time camp?
- How much support does my child need to do well in a social setting?
- What are my child's interests and hobbies?

Choose several organizations to contact and learn more about. When you call the camp, be ready to ask questions that will help you decide if this program would be the best fit for your child. For example:

- What is the counselor to child ratio?
- How is the staff trained? Do they have additional qualifications to work with children with special needs?
- If the camp is not specifically for children with autism, how will my child's needs be met?
- What does a typical daily schedule look like?

Discuss the information with your family and come to a decision together.

Once you have decided, fill out and submit the application before the listed due date.

Now you can begin taking steps to prepare your child for his or her camp experience!
#1 Camp Shriver
Located at Stonehill College and Umass Boston
Ages 8-12
General activities camp
7/5-7/29
8:30am-2pm
Free!
- Free meals
- Free transportation
Inclusive camp
www.umb.edu/csde/camp_shriver

#2 Camp Joy
Boston (multiple locations)
Ages 3-22
General activities camp w/ therapeutic activities
7/13-8/7
Includes meals
Inclusive camp
- Children and adults w/ disabilities (& their siblings)
www.cityofboston.gov/bcyyf

#3 Camp Harbor View
Boston Harbor
Ages 11-14
General activities camp w/ leadership focus
Two 4-week sessions
9am-5pm
$5/session
- Free meals
- Free Transportation
Inclusive camp
www.chvf.org/

#4 Camp FUSE
Lexington
Ages 3-5-9
Camp focus on social engagement
Two 3-week sessions
M-Th 9:30am-2:30pm
$2100/session
1:4 counselor to child ratio
Inclusive camp
www.fuseprogram.com/
Sudbury Summer Camps
www.sudbury.ma.us/recreation/2016

Preschool Pals
Sudbury
Ages 3-4
General Activities Camp
Multiple 1-week sessions
9am-12pm
$165/week
1:5 counselor to child ratio
Inclusive camp

Sudbury Summer Inclusion Program
Sudbury
For children entering grades K-5
General Activities Camp
Multiple 2-week sessions
8:45am-3pm
$455/session
-Scholarships available
1:10 counselor to child ratio
Inclusive camp
-Must have IEP to qualify

Camp Aspire
Charlestown and Westwood
Ages 5-15
Therapeutically-based summer day program
7/5-8/12
8:45am-2:45pm
$4,950-$5,100
-Financial aid available
1:3 counselor to child ratio
For children w/ high functioning ASD or related profile
www.massgeneral.org/children/aspire/services/summer-camp

Camp Grossman
Westwood
Ages 4-15
General activities camp
Multiple sessions
~$500/week
-Financial assistance available
-Transportation available
Inclusive camp

Horsing Around at the Bina Farm Center
Norfolk
Ages 6-16
Horseback riding & horsemanship classes
Multiple sessions
Inclusive camp
Financial Assistance Available
http://www.binafarm.org/programs-services/summer-programs
Camp Sunshine
Bridgewater
Ages 4-16
General activities camp
Multiple sessions
9am-3pm
$525/week
1:5 counselor to child ratio
Inclusive camp

Camp Connect
Bridgewater
Ages 4-22
General activities camp w/ therapeutic activities
3 or 6 week program
9am-3pm
$1,875- $3,625
1:4 counselor to child ratio
For children with ASD and related profile
- Must have IEP

VIP Program
Bridgewater
Ages 14-18
General and specialized activities camp
- Focus on leadership and communication to prepare campers for volunteer or paid work position
Multiple sessions
9am-3pm
$525/week
1:4 counselor to child ratio
For individuals with high functioning disabilities

Camp Stepping Stone
Bridgewater
Ages 19-35
General activities camp w/ therapeutic activities
Two 1-week sessions
9am-3pm
$525/week
1:2 counselor to adult ratio
For adults with high functioning ASD or related profile

Camp Discover
Bridgewater
Ages 4-22
General and specialized activities camp
Multiple sessions
9am-3pm
$525/week
1:1 counselor to child ratio
IEP required

Camp Triumph
Three locations: Danvers, North Reading, and Bedford
Ages 5-16
Therapeutic day camp
Multiple sessions
9am-3pm (M-Th) 9am-12pm (Fr)
$675/week
- Financial assistance available
1:3 counselor to child ratio
For children with special needs
www.triumphcenter.net/programs/therapeutic-camp
#11
Camp Apex Marcus Lewis
Westford
Ages 5-16
General activities camp
Multiple sessions
9am-4pm or 9am-1pm
$580/week or $350/week (half-day)
-Scholarships available
-Transportation offered
For children w/high functioning ASD
www.marcuslewisdaycamp.com/camps/summercamps/autism/autism

#12
Camp Arrowhead
Natick
Ages 5-adult
Multiple sessions
9am-3pm
$210-$310/week
Optional overnight program (ages 10+) for 6 nights in NH
1:1 ratio
Special needs camp
www.camparrowheadnatick.com/camp

#13
YWCA Social Skills Camp
Marshfield
Ages 7-14
6/29-8/21
9am-3pm
$595/week
Payment plan available
Day camp for children with social challenges
www.secondnaturesocialskills.com/ywca-social-skills-camp/

Community Recreation Centers with Inclusion Programs

⭐ Waltham
www.ymcaboston.org/waltham

⭐ Huntington
www.ymcaboston.org/huntington

⭐ South Shore
www.ssymca.org/

⭐ Hockomock Area
www.hockymca.org/

In addition to the centers below check with your local community recreation center to see what inclusion programs and activities they may offer!

⭐ Dorchester
www.bgcdorchester.org/

⭐ South Boston
www.bgcb.org/south-boston-club/inclusion-programming
Preparing your Child for Camp

If this is your child's first camp experience it is perfectly normal to be nervous. Following the suggestions on the next two pages will help you and your child feel more comfortable as the first day of camp nears!

Before the First Day of Camp:

#1 Visit the Camp Site
- Visit the camp site with your child before the first day
- Call to find out if there is an "open house" or chance to meet staff and other parents before the start of camp
- Practice traveling to and from the site at the hours you will be traveling this summer so your child feels comfortable with the routine

#2 Talk to Program Staff
- Share with the staff any communication or behavior strategies that will be helpful in working with your child
- Make sure the staff knows about your child's strengths and challenges

If you are worried that a noisy, chaotic environment may overwhelm your child ask the staff about a "relaxation area" where your child can go if he or she needs to take a break.

JUNE
#3 Make Point of Contact

- Establish a person on site as your point of contact
- This person may be your child's counselor, the director of the camp, or a nurse on staff
- Whoever it is, make sure that there is a direct line of communication

#4 Meds & Allergies

- The camp will likely ask you to give them information about your child's medications and allergies before the first day
- Feel free to remind your point of contact, or send your child with a written note to ensure your child's medications are given appropriately

Preparing your Camper

**Routine**

- Use strategies and reinforcement systems that you know work with your child to create a summer routine
- See p. 8 for a visual schedule that will be helpful in familiarizing your child with the morning routine before camp
- See p. 9-10 to create your own social story with your child!

**Safety**

- Will your child be outdoors most of the day? If so, make sure your child is prepared with the tools and knowledge to be safe
- Be sure to apply sunscreen in the morning, as well as send some with your child for the day
- Is there a pool? Make sure your child is comfortable around water (see p. 11-12 for a visual & information on water safety)

**Comfort**

- Pack a lunch with your child. Include his or her favorite, familiar foods
- Allow your child to bring a special toy or stuffed animal if it will help make his or her transition to camp easier
- Pack an extra pair of clean clothes. Campers often get messy and wet, which can be uncomfortable especially if your child is sensitive to these feelings
Getting Ready for Camp!

#1  Wake Up

#2  Eat Breakfast

#3  Get Dressed

#4  Brush Teeth

#5  Pack Bag

Getting ready for camp is a lot like getting ready for school. Except for when it comes to packing your bag. Instead of school supplies make sure to pack everything you need for a fun and safe day at camp. Check with your camp to see what specific supplies they recommend packing.

Don't forget your sunscreen!
I’m going to Summer Camp!

Hi, my name is ___________________.

This summer I’m going to ________________ Summer Camp.

My camp is located in ________________, Massachusetts.

I’m going to take a ________________ to get to camp.

My camp starts at ________________ and ends at ________________.

The Autism Program
At Boston Medical Center
When I go to camp I need to bring:

________________________  ______________________

________________________  ______________________

________________________  ______________________

At camp I get to participate in a lot of fun activities. For example,

________________________  ______________________

________________________  ______________________

________________________  ______________________

The activity I’m most excited about is ___________________.

My counselors names are ____________________________.

A question I have about camp is ______________________?

If I am feeling __________________, __________________, or __________________

I can _________________________________.

At the end of the day I will go home to my family.
They will be so proud of me for having a fun, happy, and safe day at camp

The Autism Program

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Water Safety

As summer rolls around, many parents find themselves spending more time near water. Whether at pools, ponds, or beaches, follow these 6 pointers to ensure a safe and fun time in the water!

1. Expose your child to water as frequently as possible
   The more time your child spends in the water the more comfortable and safe he or she will be. Check out our water safety visual on the next page to help your child get comfortable in the water!

2. Be patient with your child when he or she is learning to swim
   Every child's path to water comfort is different. Do not allow your child to rush his or her learning process by swimming in the deep end or jumping off the diving board until he or she feels ready and can demonstrate being safe.

3. Proactively watch your child in the water
   Simply being with your child in the water setting is not enough. Don't assume that because your child has mastered swimming, that he or she can be left unsupervised. Remember to keep an eye out at all times!

4. Keep an eye out for dangerous situations
   Children with ASD often lack awareness of the dangers around them, putting them at a higher risk than other children in the water. Remember to look out for things like slippery surfaces, water that is too cold, or unexpected deep water.

5. Watch out for wandering behaviors
   Children with ASD often exhibit wandering behaviors. Being near water makes these behaviors extra dangerous, especially if they are still learning how to be safe near the water. Remember to watch for wandering behavior, especially when near water.

6. Ensure that your child is wearing water safety gear
   Insist that your child wears a life-jacket or floatie until he or she has mastered swimming and water safety skills. Also note that he or she still needs to be carefully watched when wearing safety gear.
Water Safety Visual

1. Touch the Water

2. Put Hands in the Water

3. Put Feet in the Water

4. Kick the Water

5. Play in the Water

6. Get Body in the Water
Going to summer camp is not the only way to get out of the house and into the community. There are plenty of fun and interactive opportunities for your whole family right here in the city of Boston!

You know your child best, so keep in mind your child’s needs and comfort level in certain settings while planning your outing. If you would like to learn more about a certain program or event, be sure to call the location ahead of time for information and don’t be afraid to ask for the assistance your child needs.

The Boston area has a TON to offer—check out some of the exciting, inexpensive events below or go to www.cityofboston.gov/visitors/free.asp to find out about free activities in the city!

**Did you know that the Boston Conservatory has a specialized program for children with ASD?**
Visit http://www.bostonconservatory.edu/autism for more information!

**Museums**

**Boston Children’s Museum**
The perfect place for families with kids under 10 to explore and play together. On Fridays from 5-9 pm, admission costs $1.
[www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org)

**Institute of Contemporary Art**
Admission is free for youth 17 and under! Admission is also free for the whole family every Thursday from 5-9 pm. On the last Saturday of each month, attend a free day of learning, art workshops, and performances for the entire family.
[www.icaboston.org](http://www.icaboston.org)

**Museum of Science**
Take the kids stargazing at the Observatory on Friday nights for free! Weather permitting, the observatory is open every Friday, 8:30 – 10 pm, early March – late November.
The MOS also offers science summer courses with scholarships available.
[www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org)

**Museum of Fine Arts**
Children 6 and under are free! Kids 7-17 get in free weekdays after 3 pm, weekends, and Boston public school holidays.
[www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)

For only $9, MFA Artful Adventures offers customized lessons, tours, and art-making activities based on for children. This program welcomes children of all ages and abilities! When making a reservation, be sure to include any special requirements your child may need. Reservations are required two weeks in advance!
Water Fun and Community Pools

Sunday Fun in the Park
The Esplanade Association offers free activities for all, from photography classes to a kids fishing club to family yoga. There will also be games galore — badminton, croquet, paddle ball, and tug-o-war are just a few of the ones they’ve offered in the past.

www.esplanadeassociation.org

Frog Pond
Head to America’s oldest public park for some fun in the sun. Take a spin on the carousel ($3), play a family game of Frisbee, or cool off in the spray pool. The Frog Pond also has free puppet shows, yoga, and movie nights for the whole family to enjoy.

www.bostonfrogpond.com

Boston Harbor Whale Watch
Does your child love ocean animals? Take him or her whale watching for the chance to see humpback, finback, minke whales — and maybe a few dolphins! Ask about family and child rates.

www.bostonharborcruises.com

Kroc Center Water Park
Boston’s largest indoor water park features a lazy river, 25-foot lap lanes, and a three-story water slide! Check out cheap membership rates or buy a day pass to visit the indoor park, and other amenities offered at the community center.

www.use_bostonkroc.nsf

YMCA
The YMCA offers swim lessons for all ages and levels. YMCA locations offer lap swimming pools, therapy pools, splash pads, and outdoor pool and more! Contact your local YMCA to learn about schedules and rates.

www.ymcaboston.org/find-your-y

State Owned Pools
The Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation owns many pools and spray decks in and around Boston, including Brighton, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Mattapan, Roxbury, and more. Find the state owned pool closest to you!

www.cityofboston.gov/summer/water.asp

Outdoor Movie Series

Free Friday Flicks
Boston Movie Series at the Hatch Shell, Esplanade, Boston. Enjoy classic, family-oriented, feature length movies under the stars all summer long. Movies begin at sundown, but arrive early to grab your spot on the lawn and enjoy free food samples, games and giveaways.

www.celebrateboston.com/free-friday-flicks.htm

Family Film Festival
Enjoy movies and music Saturdays at the Prudential Center, Boston. Arrive early on Saturday evenings to enjoy family activities and popular tunes starting a few hours before the film!

www.celebrateboston.com/events/prudential-concerts.htm

Did you know that Swim Angelfish provides swim lessons and therapeutic classes all across the state? Visit angelfishtherapy.com for more info!
Local Family Fun Activities

1. Puppet Showplace Theatre
   - http://www.puppetshowplace.org
2. Franklin Park Zoo
   - www.zoonewengland.org
3. Boston Duck Tour
   - www.bostonducktours.com
4. New England Aquarium
   - www.neaq.org

Other Resources

2. www.BostonNavigator.org
5. www.accessrec.org/
Fun Activities to do at Home

Staying home this summer doesn’t have to be boring! Check out these suggestions for ways to have both a fun and productive summer at home with your child.

“What is Sensory Play?”

“Sensory processing,” is the way our sensory systems take in information from the environment and make sense of it.

Many children with autism have difficulty with sensory processing, making it tough to learn and process information from the world around them.

Sensory play can help your child overcome some of these challenges! Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates your young child’s senses: touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing. Sensory play gives your child the chance to explore, discover, and experiment with their surroundings in a safe and fun way!

The following sensory activities are a great way to get your child to play, create, and investigate with their senses:

**Balloon Painting**

1. Squirt 6 different colors of paint around a paint tray or paper plate.
2. Take balloons of the same color and place them in their respective colors (red balloon in red paint, etc.)
3. Dip the balloons and experiment with the different colors and textures!
4. Mix the colors and roll the balloons to create it into a learning experience.
Homemade Play Doh

Ingredients:
- 2 cups of baking soda
- 1.5 cups of water
- 1 cup corn flour
- Food coloring (optional)

Combined all ingredients into a saucepan and heat until boil while stirring. Small lumps will begin to appear, continue to stir until a thick mixture has formed. Once cool, knead together to form a smooth ball of Rubbery Goop.

Books and other activities

Take a trip to the Boston Public Library and check out these great books!

I Spy: A Book of Picture Riddles
I Spy books are fun for children of all ages. They are interactive and can benefit your child's sensory skills!

In a Pickle and Other Funny Idioms
One challenge that children with autism often experience is understanding figurative language, like idioms. This book is entertaining by illustrating the literal meaning of common idioms and also explaining their figurative meanings.

Plantzilla Goes to Camp
Plantzilla Goes to Camp is just one of many children's books that can help your child understand the summer camp experience.

Make your own I Spy sensory bag!

Materials:
- Around 10 small toys
- 1 cup of rice
- Ziploc bag
- Tape

Put the small toys in the Ziploc bag and add the rice. Tape the edges of the bag to secure close and prevent rice from spilling out. Your child can play with this by moving the rice around in order to reveal hidden toys. This is a great sensory activity and is easy to bring in the car or anywhere you go!

Accessible Playgrounds

Did you know there are accessible playgrounds throughout all of Massachusetts? Check out the full listing of playgrounds and locations at the following Accessible Playground Directory:

www.accessibleplayground.net/united-states/massachusetts/
Many children with autism have trouble in social situations and difficulty connecting with people around them.

Practicing social skills at home can help your child better communicate and connect with their peers. No matter which activity you choose, working directly on social skills is a great way to improve a child's quality of life and head towards social success.

Check out the following in-home social skills activities to help your child have fun and feel comfortable in social situations.

**Form a Band**

1. Gather up several noise-making objects (either household items such as pots, pans, bells, or actual instruments)
2. Give each person in the room an item.
3. Explain that you'll be making music together but that not every can play at once.
4. Instruct children to wait for you to point at them before they start playing. Tell them to stop playing when you point and shake your head.
5. Sit in a circles, and practice the pointing and head-shaking cues in addition to the music.
6. Give each person a chance to be the "conductor".

**Act it Out**

1. Brainstorm simple situations and emotions.
2. Write these ideas on slips of paper. Put all of the pieces in a bucket or bowl.
3. Take turns drawing pieces of paper and acting out what it says, without using any words. Everybody else can guess.

If you and your child want to make it more competitive, you can form teams!

**Your own puppet show**

1. Gather a few old socks from around the house.
2. Decorate the socks with markers, paint, yarn, or other art supplies.
3. Sit behind a table, couch, or counter and create interactions and a story-line between the different puppet characters.
LET THE COUNTDOWN TO SUMMER BEGIN!

The snow is melting, the sun is shining, and summer is right around the corner!

We understand that transitioning from a familiar school year routine can be stressful... but summer is an important time to relax and have fun! Whether your child is attending a program at school, enjoying a specialized camp, or experiencing all the exciting things that this city has to offer, our hope is that this guide has helped you to make the best plans for your family!

If you have any questions please contact us at autismprogram@bmc.org or 617-414-3842

Have a great summer!

This guide was developed by The BMC Autism Program staff and Spring 2015 Interns Lindsay Rosen & Lauren Gabriel and edited by Spring 2016 Intern Elizabeth Wolock (Tufts Eliot Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development).