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SUMMER FUN FOR CHILDREN OF ALL ABILITIES: THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) & SUMMER CAMPS

Children with learning, mental health, or physical disabilities have the right to attend summer camp alongside their peers without disabilities and cannot be denied admission or full participation due to their disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that summer camps (both private and those run by towns or municipalities) provide reasonable modifications of their policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to enable campers with disabilities to participate fully in camp programs, unless the camp can demonstrate that the necessary modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services and activities offered by the camp.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR SUMMER CAMPS

- A camp may not impose eligibility criteria for participation in its programs, services, or activities that either screen out or tend to screen out persons with disabilities, unless it can show that such requirements are necessary for the provision of the service, program, or activity.
- Camps may not exclude children based on disability and must evaluate each child individually.
- The ADA prohibits unnecessary inquiries into the existence of a disability. A camp's questionnaires and medical documentation requirements as to a child's ability to participate in various camp activities must be tied to ensuring safe participation in camp activities. The camp, however, may not use this information to screen out children with disabilities from admittance to the camp.
- Parents cannot be required to pay the cost of the reasonable modifications necessary for their child to fully participate in all camp activities.
- Camps should train staff in the requirements of the ADA.
- When necessary, camps must train staff to administer daily medicines required by campers with disabilities, such as insulin (via pump or shots) and emergency medications, such as Glucagon and Diastat, just as they do for the proper use of Epi-Pens, and oral medicines.

The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina are committed to enforcing the ADA. This bulletin contains only a short summary of legal rights and obligations under the ADA.

For more information, check out www.ada.gov; DOJ ADA Information Line: 800-514-0301 (voice); 800-514-0383 (TTY) Please also see the U.S. Attorney's Office Information sheet on summer camps at our website.

CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM, U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Website: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/civil-rights>

List of Civil Rights Statutes (civil): <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/civil-rights-laws-affirmative-civil-enforcement>

Criminal Civil Rights Laws Enforced: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/criminal-civil-rights-laws>

Civil Rights Coordinator (Civil): (864) 282-2100; **Criminal Civil Rights Coordinator:** (803) 929-3000