

Weight-Loss Camps for Youth

In this review of available weight-loss camps for youth, look closely for the overall uniqueness of each camp. Some of the camps do not allow any screen time while others offer it during the camper’s ‘free choice’ time. Some are wilderness-based while others are on a college campus. One of the similarities among these camps is the structured heart-healthy food environment coupled with hours of physical activity making weight loss highly probable for the duration of each camp stay.

What seems to be undeveloped in the majority of these camps however, is the “At Home” care, so look closely and inquire about the transitional education offered as well as camp-initiated contact or follow-up with the camper throughout the year following camp. The more developed “At Home” programs come with additional expense. Weight-loss maintenance continues to be the most challenging aspect of the weight-loss journey. Read on for more information on weight-loss camps for youth.

Website and Location	<p>New Image Camps www.newimagecamp.com Founded in 1991</p> <p>Camp Pocono Trails 90 min from NYC and Philadelphia; 350 private acres with separate pools for girls & boys</p> <p>Camp Vanguard Between Orlando and Tampa, FL; 114 acres on lake front; 30 mins from Disney allowing special day trips</p>
Population Served	Boys and girls 7-19 years old “roughly a 4 to 1 counselor-to-camper ratio” (about 30 kids per age group)
Program Cost	Short pre-camp stays to almost 8 week stays. 11 days \$2290 – 7.5 wks \$8790 Free airfare to Pocono Trails for campers West of Mississippi River!
Staff	Registered Dietitians (RDs), Certified Personal Trainers (CPT), Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, and Camp Counselors (many are active college students)
Physical Activities	Water sports, Athletics, Calisthenics & Fitness, Adventure Trails (basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball, dance, yoga, free weights, tennis, hiking, climbing wall, ropes courses, and more) 8 Activity Periods daily including free-choice
Unique Dietary Programs	Portion control and balancing food groups is the goal. 1700-1800 calorie average with 3 meals and 2 snacks. Vegetarian and Kosher available. Nutrition and cooking classes weekly. Dietitians work with special dietary needs and allergies.
After-Care Options	“At Home” booklet provided with menus, and recipes. “...on-going follow-up via phone consults or email.”
Other Information	Accredited by American Camping Association (ACA) 2-4 pounds of weight loss per week

Website and Location	Wellspring Camps www.wellspringcamps.com Locations: CA, HI, NY, NC, TX, UK, WI, FL, PA, Vancouver (see different locations for program variations)
Population Served	Boys and girls 11-18 years old, except NY which serves girls only, and La Jolla that serves 8-18 year old boys and girls. Website indicates groups are small so Director knows all campers by name.
Program Cost	12 summer programs internationally (\$6490/4wk session), year round programs at Wellspring Academies (\$26,000/4 months), and after-school programs at Wellspring Fit Clubs.
Staff	Executive Director, David Melear, MEd, Clinical Director, Daniel Kirschenbaum, PhD, ABPP, Advisory Board of 8 (MDs, PhDs, RDs), and Behavioral Coaches who are masters- or doctoral-level therapists trained in CBT and a strong component of the program.
Physical Activities	Campers will get at least 10,000 steps daily. Activities will vary by location but expect ropes courses, tennis, softball, core strengthening, water sports, kickboxing, power walking, and more.
Unique Dietary Programs	Campers follow a low-density, low-fat diet menu and professional chefs teach campers how to prepare the foods they're eating at camp. Menu includes 3 meals and 2 snacks.
After-Care Options	Continuing Care Program for 1 year includes online self-monitoring, journaling, weighing in, goal setting, correspondence with behavioral coach and it's fully refunded if criteria are met (\$600).
Other Information	4-year data shows average weight loss is 4 pounds per week with 70% who maintain or continue to lose weight at home. 3-day Family Workshop is fully refunded (\$300) if a family member attends. Insurance reimbursements: \$1500 for Camps, \$5500 for Academies.
Website and Location	Camp Shane www.campshane.com Operating since 1968. Locations: NY- Catskill Mountains 2 hrs from NYC(7-17 years old & 18-25 years old ladies) and AZ- Prescott National Forest (7-16 years old)
Population Served	Boys, girls, and young adults 7-25 years old Special High School Seniors camp for 17 years old going into 12 th grade.
Program Cost	Camp stays 3 weeks at \$3600 up to 9 weeks at \$8400 (*look for early registration discounts)
Staff	14 key staff including Pediatrician, RD, Guidance Counselor, Teachers, Psychologist, and Safety Director and Counselors Advisory panel of 6 experts—Physicians, Psychologists, RDs and Exercise Experts.
Physical Activities	Basketball, hockey, tennis, baseball, softball, rollerblading, rock climbing, lacrosse, soccer, volleyball, weight training, biking and more...aerobics and Olympic size pool for swimmers everyday; motorized water activities on 9-mile lake nearby
Unique Dietary Programs	Kid-friendly items made healthy (pizza, burgers, nuggets). Menus include 3 meals plus 2 snacks. Vegetarian menu also available. Curriculum includes cooking classes, workout book, nutrition classes.
After-Care Options	After-care includes "At Home" book, continuation of at-camp workbooks, monthly nutrition & fitness newsletters, monthly News-Bites, connection to local RDs and the camp pays part of the fee, special rate to join Dr. Dolgoff's online weight-loss program
Other Information	Strong focus on having fun as evidenced by the kid-friendly website Cognitive Behavior Therapy is used in curriculum

Website and Location	Active Challenge www.activechallenge.ca 500-acre private wilderness located at Bear Creek near Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
Population Served	Girls only 12-18 years old Limit of 40 girls
Program Cost	Camp stays are 4 weeks at \$3500 or 8 weeks at \$6500
Staff	Advanced Wilderness First Aid, National Lifeguard Service, Aquafit and swimming instructors, fitness and sport coaching certification, diplomas in Outdoor Adventure Leadership and Fitness, RDs, CPTs
Physical Activities	Yoga, strength training, stretch and relax class, step class, dance class, athletic training, gymnastics, kickboxing, aerobics, hiking, rafting, canoeing, mountain biking, ropes courses...and more 7 Activity Periods daily including free-choice
Unique Dietary Programs	RD follows Canada's Food Guide for healthy living for 3 meals plus 3 snacks daily (lowfat, high fiber, lots of fruits and vegetables). No calorie limit. Education in nutrition and portion control as well as culinary training.
After-Care Options	Campers are sent home with a personal meal and exercise plan. Staff keep in touch with campers for a three months after camp via letters, emails and phone calls.
Other Information	Average weight loss is 4.2 pounds per week
Website and Location	Camp Jump Start www.campjumpstart.com St. Louis, MI
Population Served	Boys and girls 9-17 years old
Program Cost	Camp stays are 4 weeks at \$3695 or 8 weeks at \$6695 (tuition includes the "Shapedown Program")
Staff	Owner is CPT and wife is a nurse and teacher; website states "multidisciplinary team working directly with your children" but there's very little information on this team
Physical Activities	Weight lifting, aerobics, video games, basketball, softball, soccer, mountain biking, canoeing, horseback riding, dancing, low ropes challenges and more
Unique Dietary Programs	1400-1600 calories over 3 meals and 2 snacks with open salad bar at lunch and dinner
After-Care Options	Jump Zone, is an interactive site for self-monitoring post-camp and part of the after-care program. Camper's care plan can be accessed by parent, pediatrician, and camper.
Other Information	"dramatic weight loss" maintained 5-months post camp; care plans can include camper's pediatrician

Website and Location	Camp Kaizen www.campkaizen.com Northeast Kingdom of VT
Population Served	Girls only 10-15 years old "low staff to camper ratio"
Program Cost	Camp stays are 5 weeks: must contact the office for pricing information
Staff	Founders are Nick and Cindi Bollettieri. Cindi is a family therapist by profession. Expert medical, physical, nutritional, and psychosocial advice from professionals
Physical Activities	Cell phones, video games, computers, and iPods are replaced with fresh air, hikes, night camping trips, bike trails, swimming, scavenger hunts, and camp fires. Etiquette classes and community service are also part of the curriculum.
Unique Dietary Programs	Campers learn to cook over campfires.
After-Care Options	Campers go home with recipes, activity ideas, pedometers, jump ropes, and journals to continue at home. Campers will stay in touch with counselors.
Other Information	Non-profit Accredited by ACA Developing the 4 C's: Character, Courage, Confidence, and Commitment. All campers will wear Camp Kaizen clothing provided by the site, acts as equalizer.
Website and Location	Camp Penn brook www.campennbrook.com Located at Pennington School, Pennington, NJ (1 hour from Philadelphia, 2 hours from NYC)
Population Served	Girls only 8-21 years old
Program Cost	Camp stays are 2 weeks at \$1700 through 7 weeks at \$7790 Early bird enrollment yields 2 FREE special trips.
Staff	Executive Director, Flip Shulman, has been working with weight loss camps since 1976. Other staff include master-level Fitness director, RDs, and college-degreed head counselors.
Physical Activities	Tennis, basketball, hockey, softball, soccer, archery, volleyball, track, lacrosse, dodge ball, rollerblading, yoga, kickball, Newcomb, football, ultimate Frisbee, kickboxing, pool fitness, Zumba classes, aerobics classes, self-defense, and recreational activities like bowling, mini golf, and dancing. Special day trips include Broadway shows, amusement parks, and concerts.
Unique Dietary Programs	Menus are based on the Food Guide Pyramid with emphasis on more fruits and vegetables and lower fat. There are 3 meals with unlimited salad bar and 2 snacks daily. Cooking classes and weekly nutrition sessions teach campers how to prepare and eat healthy meals.
After-Care Options	Recipe book and menu guide is given for home use. Monthly phone calls come from the camp and the toll-free number can be used by campers and family to speak with staff at any time. Additional after camp events are also scheduled.
Other Information	Average of 3-5 pounds of weight loss per week.

Website and Location	Camp Kingsmont www.campkingsmont.com Located in Amherst, Massachusetts, 800-acre campus of Hampshire College. Founded in 1976.
Population Served	Boys and girls 9-18 years old Camper to staff ratio 4:1 Camper to counselor ratio 6:1
Program Cost	From \$2495-\$7995 depending on length of stay
Staff	Staff include nutritionists, nutrition interns, instructors for a variety of sports, lifeguards, photography and marketing staff, and health professionals.
Physical Activities	Street hockey, baseball, soccer, kickball, volleyball, football, archery, swimming, lacrosse, tennis, basketball, and strength training.
Unique Dietary Programs	Menus devised by nutritionists and served by staff. Calorie count is 1500-1800 per day depending on the camper's need plus unlimited salad bar. Campers engage in cooking and nutrition classes and supermarket trips.
After-Care Options	Each camper is taught to use www.mypyramid.gov for menus and self-monitoring once at home. The nutritionist offers weekly webinars (15 campers/webinar) year round. Campers can stay in touch with Elliot Lyons, Fitness Director, via Facebook.
Other Information	ACA accredited. Average weight loss was 3.5 pounds/wk in 2009 Connections Program focuses on emotional, social, and behavioral aspects of problematic eating Expressions Program focuses on developing socialization skills and confidence in expression
Website and Location	Camp Shining Stars www.campshiningstars.org Located at Barton College in Wilson, NC
Population Served	Girls and boys 12-18 years old
Program Cost	Camp stays are 3 weeks at \$3250 and 6 weeks at \$5950 Guaranteed weight loss of 7-17% in campers completing the 6 week program or \$2000 refund.
Staff	Ira Green is founder and director; Dean of Nursing School works the programming and implementation. Advisory board of 5 includes Drs. Walter Pories and Gerard Musante
Physical Activities	Day Activities: yoga, kickball, dance, volleyball, basketball, Zumba, water polo, cheerleading, swim lessons, weight training, and more. Evening Activities: capture the flag, talent & fashion shows, wacky relays, pool parties, and more
Unique Dietary Programs	1700-1800 calorie menus including 3 meals, 2 snacks, and salad bar for lunch and dinner. College nutrition majors contribute to menu creations. Cooking and nutrition classes.
After-Care Options	CD of recipes used during camp is given for home use.
Other Information	Non-profit 95% of campers lose 8% of starting weight There's a page of parent references with contact information to help parents considering this camp.

Website and Location	<p>Camp Endeavor www.campendeavor.com Operating since 2004. Location: Dells of Wisconsin “the waterpark capital of the world”</p>
Population Served	Boys and girls 9-17 years old
Program Cost	<p>Camp stays are 2 weeks at \$2000 or 4 weeks at \$3700 Small number of “camperships” (financial aid) are available</p>
Staff	Camp Directors, education includes exercise physiology and occupational therapy. Other staff include RN, RD, MD, and behavioral coaches working 1:1 with campers.
Physical Activities	Pool activities, kickball, kickboxing, hiphop, ropes courses, weekly day trips to Devil’s Lake State Park
Unique Dietary Programs	1800 calorie menus including 3 meals and 2 snacks. There are “short sessions” on diet, nutrition, eating, and fitness. Kids prepare meals and learn how to self-portion with favorite foods like pizza, nuggets, pancakes and tacos. RD will meet 1:1 with each camper.
After-Care Options	<p>Booklet containing highlights of the education, recipes, meal ideas, healthy snacks etc. Campers can stay in contact via blog, facebook, and emails. There are accountability phone calls with behavioral coaches for additional fee.</p>
Other Information	<p>Non-profit Accredited by ACA Average weight loss of 15 pounds for campers attending 4 week session. This site emphasizes healthy eating, moving, and thinking.</p>

—Kim Gorman, MS, RD