



## **Camp Safety Policies**

### **Our Commitment to Excellence – and What That Means to You and Your Child ACA Accreditation**

As camp professionals, we understand that your biggest concern is for the safety of your child. We also know you have goals for your child's development related to the powerful lessons the camp experience provides in community, character-building, skill development, and healthy living. We share those same goals, which is why we have taken the added step of becoming an accredited camp through the American Camp Association (ACA).

ACA accreditation means that Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center submitted to a thorough review of over 200 standards of its operation by the American Camp Association (ACA) – from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. American Camp Association collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center and ACA form a partnership that promotes summers of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety.

### **ACA helps all accredited camps provide:**

- Healthy, developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences
- Discovery through experiential education
- Caring, competent role models
- Service to the community and the environment

### **Why Is ACA Accreditation Important?**

As the only recognized accrediting body for the camp experience in the United States, ACA accredits approximately 2,400+ diverse camps nationally. However, that number represents only 25 percent of the camps that operate in this country. ACA's goal is to continue to grow the number of accredited camps to ensure a safe and positive camp experience for more children. ACA-accredited camps meet up to 266 health and safety standards. Accreditation is a family's best evidence that their camp is committed to the health, safety, and overall well-being of their child. Other camps like to say they follow industry standards and best practices. Some even say they use the ACA guidelines, but the fact remains that camps that do not hold themselves up to a transparent, complete peer review of their operations are not acting in the best interests of their staff, campers, families, and the public at large. If your camp is not accredited, ask the owner or director why. ACA accreditation matters.

### **What Are the Standards of Accreditation?**

The ACA accreditation standards focus on health, safety, and risk management. They are widely used as operational benchmarks for the camp industry by local, state, and federal government entities, insurance companies, and courts of law. Our camp and program completed the peer-review process, which includes a visit by an ACA-trained team of standards volunteers, signifying that we meet the standards applicable to our program. ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to ensure that current practices at our camp reflect the highest and most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation.



## **We Set Our Standards High**

Earning and maintaining ACA accreditation takes time and commitment. We set our standards high, to provide your child with an environment where he or she is having fun and is unaware of all of the work related to safety and learning, which has been carefully incorporated into the daily routine.

To be accredited by ACA, we had to demonstrate sound practices in every aspect of camp management and operation, including:

- Site: Fire protection, food service, sleeping quarters, utility, and maintenance systems.
- Transportation: Procedures concerning drivers, vehicles, and traffic on site.
- Health and Wellness: Staff qualifications, facilities requirements, recordkeeping, storage and administration medicines, health forms.
- Operational Management: Safety regulations, emergency communication systems, procedures for intruders, personal property regulations.
- Human Resources: Staff qualifications, screening and training, supervision ratios, and procedures.
- Program Activities: Aquatics, adventure/challenge, trips, horseback riding, and staff qualifications for special programs.

Mandatory standards also include requirements for staff screening, emergency exits, first aid, aquatic-certified personnel, storage and use of flammables and firearms, emergency transportation, obtaining appropriate health information, among others.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Camp Accreditation:**

### **What's the difference between state licensing of camps and accreditation by ACA?**

Accreditation is voluntary, and ACA accreditation assures families that camps have committed to a safe, nurturing environment for their children. If a state requires licensing, it is mandatory; licensing requirements vary from state to state. Courts of law and government regulators recognize ACA standards as the standards of the camp community.

### **How do ACA standards exceed state licensing requirements?**

ACA goes beyond basic requirements for health, cleanliness, and food service into specific areas of programming, including camp staff from director through counselors, emergency management plans, health care, and management. ACA applies separate standards for activities such as waterfront, horseback riding, and adventure, and travel.

What are some of the ACA standards for camps?

- Staff-to-camper ratios that are appropriate for different age groups
- Goals for camp activities that are developmentally based
- Emergency transportation available at all times
- First-aid facilities and trained staff available when campers are present



## **Does ACA accreditation require criminal background checks?**

ACA accreditation standards require an annual criminal background check on all seasonal staff and a criminal background check at least once every five years for year-round staff. They also require an annual check of the National Sex Offender Public website and an annual disclosure statement that attests to the non-conviction of violent crimes against children. When talking to a camp director as you consider enrolling your child, ask what the screening process for that camp includes.

## **What the ACA Accreditation Standards Mean to You and Your Child**

ACA accreditation serves as an assurance to families that our camp cares enough to submit to a transparent, thorough review of our entire operation. Our goal is to provide parents with as much information about our camp, to reassure you about your camp choice. Our voluntary participation in the professional development and accreditation process of the American Camp Association demonstrates our commitment to providing you and your child with the best possible camp experience.

For more information about ACA accreditation, contact our camp director or visit the American Camp Association website at [ACACamps.org](http://ACACamps.org).

## **Pocono Plateau Training & Supervision:**

Pocono Plateau full-time, year-round staff includes the Camp Director, Program Manager, Food and Hospitality Manager, Maintenance Manager, and Office Manager. For summer camp, additional staff are hired to help facilitate programs, prepare meals, and assist in maintenance needs. Adult volunteers stay for a week of camp providing supervision and support for summer campers. All Pocono Plateau full time staff, summer staff, and volunteers go through training and are required to provide background checks and child abuse clearances prior to their service. Campers are supervised at all times based on age-appropriate camper to counselor ratios.

## **Summer Camp Nursing Staff:**

Our registered nurses reside on site under a physician's standing orders. The nurses stay in cabins on both the main site and the adventure site. The nurses' stations have infirmaries where medications are monitored and always locked. Nurses collect and review the medical forms, monitor children with medication needs and specific allergies, and provide first aid and care for injured or sick children.

## **Pocono Plateau Certified Lifeguards on Waterfront:**

Pocono Plateau has a lakefront offering swimming and boating. We employ certified lifeguards to supervise all waterfront activities. Campers must take a swim test prior to entering the lake. There are three swim levels: beginner (beach/shallow water), intermediate (shallow water and buoy lined designated area), and advance (full access to buoyed area). We use a swimmer check at Pocono Plateau's lakefront, ensuring campers enter and exit the waterfront area safely. Lifeguards call swimmer checks every 20-30 minutes during waterfront time to make sure all campers are accounted for.



---

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS****SUMMER 2026**

---

## **Pocono Plateau Inclusivity Policy**

Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center is one of four camps in the Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist Conference. Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries serve as sacred common ground for a great diversity of people from many backgrounds. Regardless of the varying theological perspectives among us, we all have a deep commitment to do no harm. More than this, we are committed to doing good. We come together in the wide embrace of God to love and be the community for each other as children of God. Love calls us to eliminate all harassment, devaluing, bullying, lack of acceptance, and other actions that harm or isolate any individual or group. We endeavor to interact in ways that honor each person as one created in God's image who is beloved beyond measure. Christian hospitality and deep welcoming are part of the enduring purpose of Camp and Retreat Ministries.