

Quest’s Detailed Camp Description

Quest Therapeutic Camps of Southern California offers 7 weeks of summer day camp and school year therapy groups in Huntington Beach for children with mild to moderate difficulties behaviorally, emotionally and/or socially.  We are proud to be accredited by the American Camp Association.

**Quest Camps provide:**

1. a safe, supportive environment that has been proven effective;
2. individualized behavior plans;
3. group therapy four times per week;
4. occupational therapy services to assist children in building their skills in self-regulation, sensory processing, motor skill development and bilateral coordination;
5. a 6 to 1 camper to staff ratio for older children and a 4 to 1 ratio for our youngest campers;
6. parent meetings with home therapeutic goal development;
7. consistent positive interventions developed in our Quest Therapeutic Model;
8. Engaging fun activities for campers such as rock climbing, soccer, arts and crafts, and field trips such as high-ropes courses, trips to Knott's Berry Farm, bowling, Boomers, and beach days;
9. Theme weeks to excite while provide unique opportunities for growth. This year’s themes are Fictional Characters Week, Video Game Making Week, Movie Making Week, Olympic Week, Future Week, and Adventure Week.
10. We are also providing a residential camp experience in Big Bear (3 nights/4 days) this year.

**Quest Campers**
Both boys and girls participate in our program. Campers range from 6 to 18 years of age and may experience mild to moderate difficulties behaviorally, emotionally and/or socially. Quest campers may struggle finding stable relationships or consistently achieving their goals. They may have diagnoses of ADHD, anxiety, high functioning autism (previously called Asperger’s Disorder), difficulties with sensory processing and sensory integration, depression, learning disabilities and/or social problems. Many campers do not have a diagnosis but still need help developing self-regulation, social skills, and self-esteem.

Quest campers do not look or act differently from other children. Watching our campers play and interact would be no different from watching children on the playground. The problems our campers experience are often more subtle, but are significant in their impact on the child and family.

*Children who have severe aggressiveness, serious psychological problems, behavioral disorders or severe family problems are not appropriate for the program.*

**Senior Campers**
As our program has developed, so has our awareness of the needs of teenagers. Senior campers enjoy the same benefits of regular campers along with added opportunities for learning. Campers are instructed and supervised to work with younger campers and develop programming ideas for the camp. They receive special benefits and privileges for their endeavors. There are also opportunities for return campers to be junior leaders. Individual needs and ability screening will determine this. Due to the high performance expectations required, participation in this group is restricted.

**Quest Parents and Home Therapeutic Strategies**
Our campers’ parents receive directions and techniques to integrate Quest strategies at home.  Through **weekly evening parent meetings,** parents receive written and verbal evaluations of their child’s progress and are given the opportunity to discuss personal needs. Parent involvement in the Quest therapeutic program is essential. During the summer, parents meet in a group with counselors and therapists to review their child's progress, understand Quest strategies and integrate recommendations based on the staff's experience. Meetings are held every Wednesday evening during the first 6 weeks of summer camp and once every 5 weeks during the school year group. Additionally, meetings serve as a source of support for parents. Since the coordination between home and camp is essential for many camper's success, parents are urged to use the Quest Camp Parent Point sheet to identify specific goals and assign points on a daily basis. During the summer, these points are sent to camp every Thursday to be used with camp points at the Quest Store.

**Quest's Strategy/Therapeutic Model**
Quest utilizes a comprehensive therapeutic system that provides a treatment plan individualized for each child.  Interventions combine mental health support, social skill development, and occupational therapy. Quest implements an experiential learning program that combines aspects of cognitive behavioral therapy, and skill development in a variety of areas including teaching and practicing strategies for emotion regulation and social skill development including how to engage in social thinking. Through observing the child in camp activities throughout the day, our staff is able to see how problems present themselves. Quest staff is trained to provide positive intervention to teach new, constructive behaviors. Counselors provide verbal support for accomplishments and directions for areas of improvement.  A 6 to 1 ratio of staff to children is provided for older campers, while a 4 to 1 ratio is provided for younger campers.

Quest provides an atmosphere where children feel accepted and respected. The program has been specifically developed to reduce any apprehension or discomfort that campers may experience. This environment allows children to take risks, try new positive behaviors, listen to staff direction, handle disappointments and develop positive relationships with other campers and staff. Using parental input and individual assessment by Quest professionals, each child is provided a treatment plan that helps address the most critical issues. During each hour of every day, the child receives specific staff feedback about the positive and negative aspects of his/her behavior. By developing this open, nurturing environment, campers make positive changes.

Realistically, change takes time. The longer a camper attends Quest, the more progress s/he makes. While three consecutive weeks is the minimum attendance, longer attendance is strongly recommended. In the first weeks, the camper understands the relationship of his/her behavior to others’ reactions. Then, experimentation with new behaviors and attitudes occurs. As the child feels more confident, positive behaviors are strengthened. Longer participation solidifies new patterns. Based on an independent research study and parent evaluations over several years of the founding Bay Area Camp, Quest has been found to significantly reduce hyperactivity, impulsivity, aggression and inattention while improving peer relations, family relations, athletic competency, behavioral control and self-esteem. A study of the Quest program in Huntington Beach in 2013-14 further substantiated the power of the Quest Therapeutic Model as effective treatment by finding similar results with significant decreases in aggression and impulsivity and significant improvements in social awareness, social cognition, social communication, social problems, and behavioral concerns. More specific information is available on the Quest website at [www.questcampsofsocal.com](http://www.questcampsofsocal.com) under the Research & Support link.

**Quest Activities**Quest is fun! Through the day camp activities, children have fun while counselors assist them in solving problems and increasing confidence. Sports such as rock climbing and soccer, games, arts & crafts, activities, library time, singing and “Fabulous Fridays” entertain while providing learning experiences at camp.  Soccer is played in the soccer arena at the Huntington Beach Sports Complex.  Providing children the opportunity for free play is also in place since many of our campers struggle with unstructured free play in the school setting and we want to build their skills in this area. Field trips include beach days, Knott’s Berry Farm, bowling, Boomers, and an experiential high-ropes course. Field trips have been developed to provide the most entertainment with opportunity for personal growth within the safety found at Quest Camp.

\*\*Since ClimbX was torn down earlier this year, it is unclear at this time how much rock climbing will be on our schedule for this summer. There is rock climbing at Boomers and the OC Ropes Course, but I won’t know about other options until summer gets closer.

We are excited to have Wayne Centra, MOTR/L, of Karate For All returning this summer to provide his Martial Arts Occupational Therapy Program for our campers! Wayne creates occupational therapy programming specifically created for Quest campers. Wayne's weekly groups typically build skills in areas such as sensory processing, motor planning, gross motor skills, strength building, and social skills.

**Theme Weeks**Each week of camp we offer specific themes to infuse the camp experience with fun additional opportunities for growth. This year's themes are:

**Week 1: Fictional Characters Week**
Fictional Characters week offers our campers the chance to have many activities to learn powerful life lessons from some great literary heroes.
 **Week 2: Future Week**
Future week programming includes activities in rocketry and wacky science. We are excited to have the OC Rocketry Club coming back to camp to provide unique projects specifically designed for our campers.

**Week 3: Movie Making Week**
A camp favorite, movie making week creates the avenue for children to work together to create their own movie.

**Week 4: Video Game/Social Media Week**
Video Game Making Week offers a chance for our campers to make a video game focused on building social skills while working as a member of a team.

**Week 5: Olympic Week**
This week allows our staff to challenge campers and celebrate their successes in many areas including athletics, social skills, and reaching individualized goals.
 **Week 6: Adventure Week**
Adventure week allows for us to assist our children in finding more out about nature and how to reach for new heights.

**Week 7: Big Bear Residential Week**
The Big Bear Residential Week includes is a 3 night/4 day camp experience with special water based activities. New Quest campers are eligible for this week if they have already completed a minimum of 3 weeks of camp and have demonstrated behavior that is consistent with success experiences in more challenging field trips. Return campers can have this be one of their 3 weeks at Quest on a case-by-case basis at the director’s discretion. This week includes therapeutic groups and interventions similar to those in the other weeks of camp and is a culmination of camp.

**Quest Staff**

Jodie Knott, Ph.D., camp director and licensed clinical psychologist, coordinates the Quest treatment program. She has created and facilitated therapeutic, experiential learning interventions for children for over since 1999 and specializes in the assessment and treatment of attention and learning disorders, in addition to mood disorders. Quest staff is trained to provide positive intervention to teach new, constructive behaviors. Counselors provide verbal support for accomplishments and directions for areas of improvement. By developing an open and nurturing environment where children feel accepted and respected, campers make positive changes because they feel safe to try new behaviors. Bios of Quest’s head staff are available on the website.

**Nutrition/Allergy Information**

An education component about the importance of good health through appropriate exercise and nutrition is also included into programming.  Quest is a soda and candy free zone in which campers earn extra rewards for making good nutritional choices. Also a nutritionist has provided consultation to assist with planning healthy snacks for campers. At Quest, we try to help children access our programming when possible. For food allergies, we are a no peanut camp (with no peanuts or peanut butter allowed). We do allow for children to have food products that are processed in a facility with peanuts and they can bring other types of nuts. Our campers do not share food. Dr. Jodie Knott can discuss specific questions related to your child’s unique needs.

**Payment Options and Insurance**

Payments are connected to our registration link on the website. Quest does offer payment plan options. Our Insurance Information link has a lot of detailed information about how to access insurance benefits and other funding sources (Regional Center and Extended School Year) specific to Quest.

**Support for Quest**

**(more detailed information including charts, research, and testimonials available on the website under Research and Support)**

Quest parents consistently rate very high satisfaction with the overall summer program, quality of staff, individualized goals and behavior ratings, campers’ enjoyment, and the ability to keep their child’s interest. Physicians, educators, therapists and parents refer families to Quest because of the consistent progress children make with the therapeutic program.

We are very proud at Quest to have evidence-based research that supports what parents and professionals have seen since 1989! During the summer of 2008, 155 families participated in an independent research study by Lisa Greenberg to measure the effectiveness of Quest’s therapeutic program. The results demonstrated treatment benefits rarely seen in psychological programs. Quest was found to provide effective individualized treatment for children 6-18 years old with mild to moderate behavioral, emotional and/or social problems.  Significant reductions in hyperactivity, impulsivity, aggression and inattention were found, along with improvements in peer relations, family relations, athletic competency, behavioral control and self-esteem.  Behavioral problems were found to decrease not only at camp, but also at home, school and everyday life. Children who come to Quest struggling to make friends, handling frustration and conquering their fears, leave with increased self-esteem and improved peer and family relationships. Their fears and frustrations are reduced and behavioral problems become less influential in their lives.

Specific to the Southern California camp, Quest parents report change across most treatment areas (Impulsivity, Attentiveness, Cooperation, Frustration Tolerance, tantrums, Following Directions, Flexibility, Conversational Skills, Concentration, Organizational Skills, Self-Esteem, Peer Relationships, Family Relationships, Fearfulness, and General Anxiety) for a majority of quest campers.

Additional camp information is available at www.questcampsofsocal.com or by contacting Dr. Jodie Knott at (714) 490-3428 or at jknott@questsolutionssocal.com.