



Camp Spark Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is the cost for my child to attend Camp Spark?

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes [NWABA] staff work tirelessly to provide all of our programs, including all Camp Spark sessions, at no cost to our athletes and campers. Donations are always appreciated but never required. These donations allow us to continue to expand the impact of Camp Spark.

2) Can my child attend Camp Spark sessions if we live out of state?

Registration for some Camp Spark sessions is limited to residents of the states in which they are held. Others are limited to campers selected by NWABA staff because of the structure of the session. NWABA staff are working to expand the number and type of Camp Spark sessions.

3) Is this an overnight camp?

Yes! All Camp Spark sessions are overnight. There are both weeklong and weekend sessions of Camp Spark, all of which are overnight.

4) What staff will be working with my camper?

We hire a variety of professionals and pre-professionals in the physical activity, visual impairments, and teaching fields from across the United States. Our staff has exceptional experience teaching sports, physical activity, and Expanded Core Curriculum skills through the modality of sports to youth with visual impairments. Additionally, we host two to three Paralympians who are medalists in their respective sports to mentor the campers in their respective sport.

5) What background checks must staff and volunteers complete?

All of our staff and volunteers must complete a Voluntary Disclosure Statement, a comprehensive background check, which includes a check of the National Sex Offender Registry. Additionally, we check a minimum of three professional references for our staff and volunteers.



6) What is the ratio of campers to counselors?

One counselor will work directly with and supervise two campers throughout the session for a 2:1 direct supervision ratio. There are a myriad of other staff and volunteers working with campers at activities and throughout the day at camp. With 40 campers and approximately 60 adults, including NWABA staff, nurses, leadership staff, counselors, and others, there ratio frequently is closer to 1:1 and never greater than 2:1.

7) With whom will my camper be rooming?

Rooming arrangements look different at each Camp Spark session. For some sessions, campers will room with a peer in a double occupancy room, in others they will be in a single room within a multiple occupancy suite. For some sessions, campers will be in a cabin style housing, where they will share one large room with multiple campers. In all rooming situations, camper assignments will be based on their identified gender.

8) Can families come to see any of the camp activities?

For some sessions, there will be opportunities for parents to come and see campers participate in a few camp wide competitions during closing ceremonies. We do ask that families only come to camp during scheduled times, unless there is an emergency. Families can keep up with what is happening through the photos we post on social media throughout the session.

9) What sports will my child be doing?

Sports will vary from session to session, but some of the sports include tandem biking, track and field, 5-a-side soccer, judo, beep baseball, swimming, goalball, beep kickball, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, broomball, and downhill skiing and snowboarding.

10) Can my child bring any food to camp?

Three healthy meals per day and many healthy snacks are provided throughout the day and we work with the dining hall to accommodate dietary needs. Campers can bring non-perishable snacks to the session, however we do ask that these be healthy as one thing that we encourage throughout each session is developing healthy eating skills.



11) Are cellphones allowed at camp?

We discourage campers from bringing their cell phones to camp. Should you choose to send your child to camp with a cell phone or other electronic device, know that we are not responsible for any lost or damaged items. All cell phones will be kept by the Camp Director during times that campers are not allowed to use them and campers will be allowed to check out their cell phone during specified times to use them to call home or listen to music or books. Campers are allowed to call home starting the second afternoon of the session and a phone will be available for their use if they do not bring one.

12) What happens if my child becomes homesick?

For many campers, Camp Spark will be their first experience sleeping away from home, particularly for an extended period of time and in an unfamiliar environment. Together, our Co-Camp Directors have over 20 combined years of experience working at various overnight camps and are very experienced in caring for campers with homesickness. We view this as a great experience to work with campers, building a relationship with them, to help them work through their homesickness. We find that keeping campers engaged in camp activities helps them to best acclimate. We find that the overwhelming majority of campers turn the corner in the first few days.

13) Can I send my child a care package or letter at camp?

For weeklong sessions, yes! We will send out the session mailing address about one week before each session starts. We will distribute any camper mail we receive either during rest period or before bed. We suggest you send mail early in the week to ensure it gets to your camper while they are still at camp. Alternatively, and for sessions shorter than a week, you can leave any mail with your camper's counselor for them to distribute on a specific day.

14) Is there nursing staff at camp?

Yes, there is always at least one RN at camp on duty at all times. Our nurses administer all of the campers' medications, both prescription and non-prescription, including injections. When filling out the health forms, parents and guardians will have the opportunity to note which non-prescription medications their camper is able to take based on a list of those available at camp. Our nurses will also be available to take care of any emergency or non-emergency incidents.



15) I want to share my child’s accomplishments and abilities with their teachers, IEP and 504 teams when they leave camp. How can I do that?

Our biggest desire for our campers is that they take the skills they have learned at camp home to their schools and communities and continue to put into practice what they have learned. Therefore, our counselors, sport specialists, and O&M specialists will complete an assessment on your camper that outlines what they accomplished and how they accomplished it. We will send families and the camper’s teacher of the visually impaired a copy of the assessment after camp. This way, teachers, educational teams, and coaches can employ the teaching methods and adaptations used during camp to ensure physical activity is accessible for our campers, regardless of the activity or location. We also have a Sports Adaptations program, which provides adaptive equipment available for lending, adaptations videos, and PE consultations to help make PE and physical activity more accessible for our campers when they leave camp.

16) Where can I find more specific information about each session?

On the Camp Spark Sessions page on our website you can find more information about each session of Camp Spark, including the dates, location, and eligibility requirements.